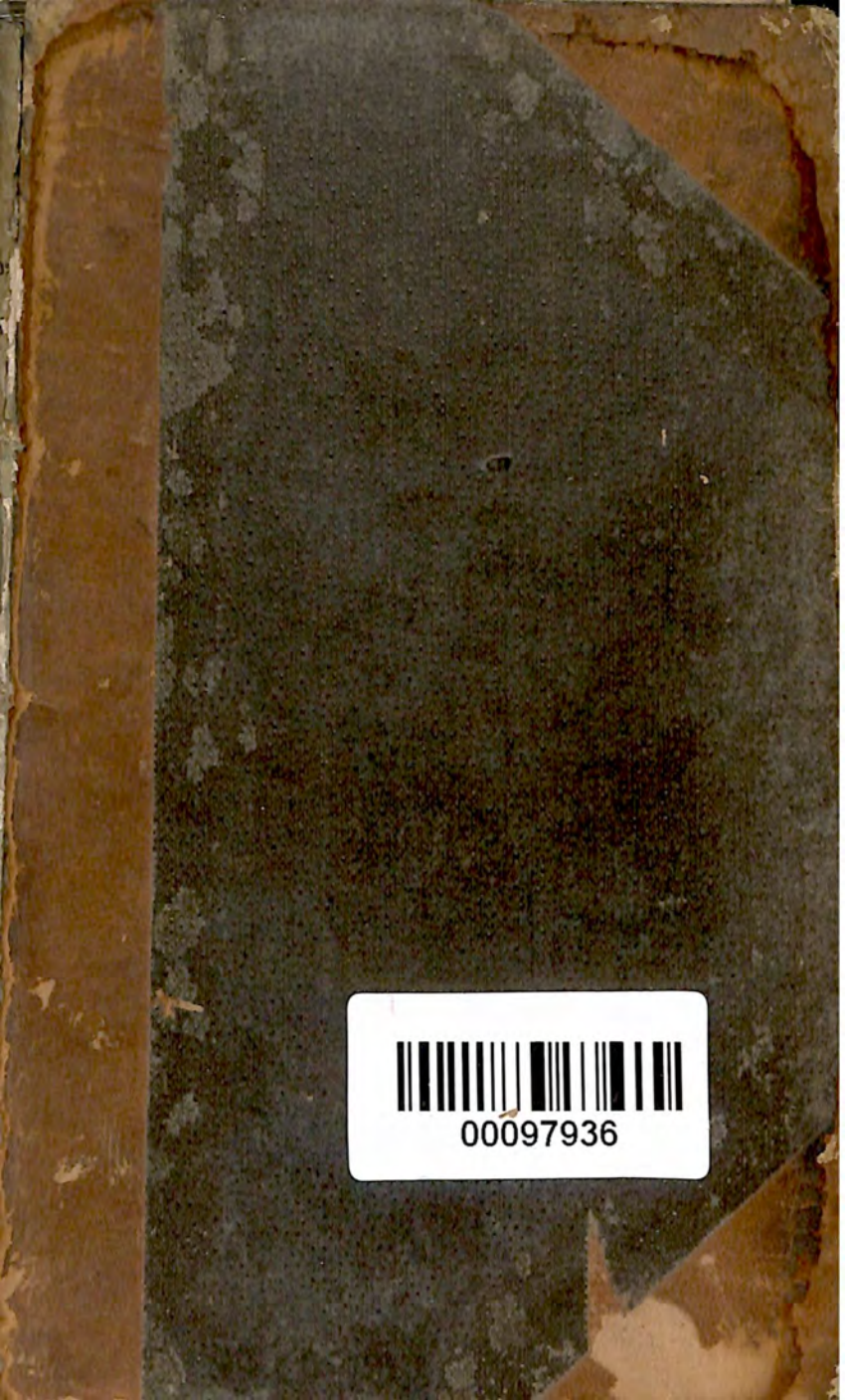
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THE RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

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THE

RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS SPORTING JACKET.

FYTTE FIRST.

THERE is a fine and beautiful alliance between all pastimes pursued on flood, field, and fell. The principles in human nature on which they depend, are in all the same; but those principles are subject to infinite modifications and varieties, according to the difference of individual and national character. All such pastimes, whether followed merely as pastimes, or as professions, or as the immediate means of sustaining life, require sense, sagacity, and knowledge of nature and nature's laws; nor less, patience, perseverance, courage even, and bodily strength or activity, while the spirit which animates and supports them is a spirit of

anxiety, doubt, fear, hope, joy, exultation, and triumph —in the heart of the young a fierce passion—in the heart of the old a passion still, but subdued and tamed down, without, however, being much dulled or deadened, by various experience of all the mysteries of the calling, and by the gradual subsiding of all impetuous impulses in the frames of all mortal men beyond perhaps three-score, when the blackest head will be becoming grey, the most nervous knee less firmly knit, the most steely-springed instep less elastic, the keenest eye less of a far-keeker, and, above all, the most boiling heart less like a caldron or a crater—yea, the whole man subject to some dimness or decay, and, consequently, the whole duty of man like the new edition of a book, from which many passages that formed the chief glory of the *editio princeps* have been expunged—the whole character of the style corrected without being thereby improved—just like the later editions of the Pleasures of Imagination, which were written by Akenside when he was about twenty-one, and altered by him at forty—to the exclusion or destruction of many most *splendida vitia*, by which process the poem, in our humble opinion, was shorn of its brightest beams, and suffered disastrous twilight and eclipse—perplexing critics.

Now, seeing that such pastimes are in number almost infinite, and infinite the varieties of human character, pray what is there at all surprising in your being madly fond of shooting—and your brother Tom just as foolish about fishing—and cousin Jack perfectly insane on fox-hunting—while the old gentleman your father, in

spite of wind and weather, perennial gout, and annual apoplexy, goes a-coursing of the white-hipped hare on the bleak Yorkshire wolds—and uncle Ben, as if just escaped from Bedlam or St Luke's, with Dr Haslam at his heels, or with a few hundred yards' start of Dr Warburton, is seen galloping, in a Welsh wig and strange apparel, in the rear of a pack of Lilliputian beagles, all barking as if they were as mad as their master, supposed to be in chase of an invisible animal that keeps eternally doubling in field and forest—"still hoped for, never seen," and well christened by the name of Escape?

Phrenology sets the question for ever at rest. All people have thirty-three faculties. Now there are but twenty-four letters in the alphabet; yet how many languages—some six thousand we believe, each of which is susceptible of many dialects! No wonder, then, that you might as well try to count all the sands on the seashore as all the species of sportsmen.

There is, therefore, nothing to prevent any man with a large and sound development from excelling, at once, in rat-catching and deer-stalking—from being, in short, a universal genius in sports and pastimes. Heaven has made us such a man.

Yet there seems to be a natural course or progress in pastimes. We do not now speak of marbles—or knuckling down at taw—or trundling a hoop—or pall-lall—or pitch and toss—or any other of the games of the school playground. We restrict ourselves to what, somewhat

inaccurately perhaps, are called field-sports. Thus Angling seems the earliest of them all in the order of nature. There the new-breeched urchin stands on the low bridge of the little bit burnie! and with crooked pin, baited with one unwrithing ring of a dead worm, and attached to a yarn-thread—for he has not yet got into hair, and is years off gut—his rod of the mere willow or hazel wand, there will he stand during all his play-hours, as forgetful of his primer as if the weary art of printing had never been invented, day after day, week after week, month after month, in mute, deep, earnest, passionate, heart-mind-and-soul-engrossing hope of some time or other catching a minnow or a beardie! A tug—a tug! With face ten times flushed and pale by turns ere you could count ten, he at last has strength, in the agitation of his fear and joy, to pull away at the monster—and there he lies in his beauty among the gowans and the greensward, for he has whapped him right over his head and far away, a fish a quarter of an ounce in weight, and, at the very least, two inches long! Off he flies, on wings of wind, to his father, mother, and sisters, and brothers, and cousins, and all the neighbourhood, holding the fish aloft in both hands, still fearful of its escape, and, like a genuine child of corruption, his eyes brighten at the first blush of cold blood on his small fumy fingers. He carries about with him, up-stairs and down-stairs, his prey upon a plate; he will not wash his hands before dinner, for he exults in the silver scales adhering to the thumb-nail that scooped the pin out of the baggy's maw—and

at night, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined," he is overheard murmuring in his sleep—a thief, a robber, and a murderer, in his yet infant dreams!

From that hour Angling is no more a mere delightful day-dream, haunted by the dim hopes of imaginary minnows, but a reality—an art—a science—of which the flaxen-headed schoolboy feels himself to be master—a mystery in which he has been initiated; and off he goes now, all alone, in the power of successful passion, to the distant brook—brook a mile off—with fields, and hedges, and single trees, and little groves, and a huge forest of six acres, between and the house in which he is boarded or was born! There flows on the slender music of the shadowy shallows—there pours the deeper din of the birch-tree'd waterfall. The scared water-pyet flits away from stone to stone, and dipping, disappears among the airy bubbles, to him a new sight of joy and wonder. And oh! how sweet the scent of the broom or furze, yellowing along the braes, where leap the lambs, less happy than he, on the knolls of sunshine! His grandfather has given him a half-crown rod in two pieces—yes, his line is of hair twisted—plaited by his own soon-instructed little fingers. By Heavens, he is fishing with the fly! And the Fates, who, grim and grisly as they are painted to be by full-grown, ungrateful, lying poets, smile like angels upon the paidler in the brook, winnowing the air with their wings into western breezes, while at the very first throw the yellow trout forsakes his fastness beneath the bog-wood, and with a lazy wallop, and then a sudden plunge, and then a race like light-

ning, changes at once the child into the boy, and shoots through his thrilling and aching heart the ecstasy of a new life expanding in that glorious pastime, even as a rainbow on a sudden brightens up the sky. *Fortuna favet fortibus*—and with one long pull, and strong pull, and pull all together, Johnny lands a twelve-incher on the soft, smooth, silvery sand of the only bay in all the burn where such an exploit was possible, and dashing upon him like an osprey, soars up with him in his talons to the bank, breaking his line as he hurries off to a spot of safety twenty yards from the pool, and then flinging him down on a heath-surrounded plat of sheep-nibbled verdure, lets him bounce about till he is tired, and lies gasping with unfrequent and feeble motions, bright and beautiful, and glorious with all his yellow light and crimson lustre, spotted, speckled, and starred in his scaly splendour, beneath a sun that never shone before so dazzlingly; but now the radiance of the captive creature is dimmer and obscured, for the eye of day winks and seems almost shut behind that slow-sailing mass of clouds, composed in equal parts of air, rain, and sunshine.

Springs, summers, autumns, winters—each within itself longer, by many times longer than the whole year of grown-up life, that slips at last through one's fingers like a knotless thread—pass over the curled darling's brow; and look at him now, a straight and strengthy stripling, in the savage spirit of sport, springing over rock-ledge after rock-ledge, nor heeding aught as he plashes knee-deep, or waistband-high, through river-

feeding torrents, to the glorious music of his running and ringing reel, after a tongue-hooked salmon, insanely seeking with the ebb of tide, but all in vain, the white breakers of the sea. No hazel or willow wand, no half-crown rod of ash framed by village wright, is now in his practised hands, of which the very left is dexterous; but a twenty-feet rod of Phin's, all ring-rustling, and a-glitter with the preserving varnish, limber as the attenuating line itself, and lithe to its topmost tenuity as the elephant's proboscis—the hiccory and the horn without twist, knot, or flaw—from butt to fly a faultless taper, "fine by degrees and beautifully less," the beau-ideal of a rod by the skill of cunning craftsman to the senses materialized! A fish—fat, fair, and forty! "She is a salmon, therefore to be woo'd—she is a salmon, therefore to be won"—but shy, timid, capricious, headstrong, now wrathful and now full of fear, like any other female whom the cruel artist has hooked by lip or heart, and, in spite of all her struggling, will bring to the gasp at last; and then with calm eyes behold her lying in the shade dead, or worse than dead, fast-fading, and to be re-illumined no more the lustre of her beauty, insensible to sun or shower, even the most perishable of all perishable things in a world of perishing!—But the salmon has grown sulky, and must be made to spring to the plunging stone. There, suddenly, instinct with new passion, she shoots out of the foam like a bar of silver bullion; and, relapsing into the flood, is in another moment at the very head of the waterfall! Give her the butt—give her the butt—or she is gone for ever with the thunder into

ten fathom deep!—Now comes the trial of your tackle—and when was Phin ever known to fail at the edge of cliff or cataract? Her snout is southwards—right up the middle of the main current of the hill-born river, as if she would seek its very course where she was spawned! She still swims swift, and strong, and deep—and the line goes steady, boys, steady—stiff and steady as a Tory in the roar of Opposition. There is yet an hour's play in her dorsal fin—danger in the flap of her tail—and yet may her silver shoulder shatter the gut against a rock. Why, the river was yesterday in spate, and she is fresh run from the sea. All the lesser waterfalls are now level with the flood, and she meets with no impediment or obstruction—the course is clear—no tree-roots here—no floating branches—for during the night they have all been swept down to the salt loch. *In medio tutissimas ibis*—ay, now you feel she begins to fail—the butt tells now every time you deliver your right. What! another mad leap! yet another sullen plunge! She seems absolutely to have discovered, or rather to be an impersonation of, the Perpetual Motion. Stand back out of the way, you son of a sea-cook!—you in the tattered blue breeches, with the tail of your shirt hanging out. Who the devil sent you all here, ye vagabonds?—Ha! Watty Ritchie, my man, is that you? God bless your honest laughing phiz! What, Watty, would you think of a Fish like that about Peebles? Tam Grieve never gruppit sae heavy a ane since first he belanged to the Council.—Curse that colley! Ay! well done, Watty! Stone him to Stobbo. Confound these stirks—if that white one,

with caving horns, kicking heels, and straight-up tail, come bellowing by between us and the river, then, "Madam! all is lost, except honour!" If we lose this Fish at six o'clock, then suicide at seven. Our will is made—ten thousand to the Foundling—ditto to the Thames Tunnel——ha—ha—my Beauty! Methinks we could fain and fond kiss thy silver side, languidly lying afloat on the foam as if all further resistance now were vain, and gracefully thou wert surrendering thyself to death! No faith in female—she trusts to the last trial of her tail—sweetly workest thou, O Reel of Reels! and on thy smooth axle spinning sleep'st, even, as Milton describes her, like our own worthy planet. Scrope—Bainbridge—Maule—princes among Anglers—oh! that you were here! Where the devil is Sir Humphrey? At his retort? By mysterious sympathy—far off at his own Trows, the Kerss feels that we are killing the noblest Fish whose back ever rippled the surface of deep or shallow in the Tweed. Tom Purdy stands like a seer, entranced in glorious vision, beside turreted Abbotsford. Shade of Sandy Govan! Alas! alas! Poor Sandy—why on thy pale face that melancholy smile!—Peter! The Gaff! The Gaff! Into the eddy she sails, sick and slow, and almost with a swirl—whitening as she nears the sand—there she has it—struck right into the shoulder, fairer than that of Juno, Diana, Minerva, or Venus—and lies at last in all her glorious length and breadth of beaming beauty, fit prey for giant or demigod angling before the Flood!

> "The child is father of the man,
> And I would wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety!"

So much for the Angler. The Shooter, again, he begins with his pipe-gun, formed of the last year's growth of a branch of the plane-tree—the beautiful dark-green-leaved and fragrant-flowered plane-tree — that stands straight in stem and round in head, visible and audible too from afar the bee-resounding umbrage, alike on stormy sea-coast and in sheltered inland vale, still loving the roof of the fisherman's or peasant's cottage.

Then comes, perhaps, the city pop-gun, in shape like a very musket, such as soldiers bear—a Christmas present from parent, once a colonel of volunteers—nor feeble to discharge the pea-bullet or barley-shot, formidable to face and eyes; nor yet unfelt, at six paces, by hinder-end of playmate, scornfully yet fearfully exposed. But the shooter soon tires of such ineffectual trigger—and his soul, as well as his hair, is set on fire by that extraordinary compound—Gunpowder. He begins with burning off his eyebrows on the King's birthday; squibs and crackers follow, and all the pleasures of the pluff. But he soon longs to let off a gun—"and follow to the field some warlike lord"—in hopes of being allowed to discharge one of the double-barrels, after Ponto has made his last point, and the half-hidden chimneys of home are again seen smoking among the trees. This is his first practice in fire-arms, and from that hour he is—a Shooter.

Then there is in most rural parishes—and of rural parishes alone do we condescend to speak—a pistol, a horse one, with a bit of silver on the butt—perhaps one that originally served in the Scots Greys. It is bought, or borrowed, by the young shooter, who begins firing first at barn-doors, then at trees, and then at living things —a strange cur, who, from his lolling tongue, may be supposed to have the hydrophobia—a cat that has purred herself asleep on the sunny churchyard wall, or is watching mice at their hole-mouths among the graves—a water-rat in the mill-lead—or weasel that, running to his retreat in the wall, always turns round to look at you—a goose wandered from his common in disappointed love —or brown duck, easily mistaken by the unscrupulous for a wild one, in pond remote from human dwelling, or on meadow by the river side, away from the clack of the muter-mill. The corby-crow, too, shouted out of his nest on some tree lower than usual, is a good flying mark to the more advanced class; or morning magpie, a-chatter at skreigh of day close to the cottage door among the chickens; or a flock of pigeons wheeling overhead on the stubble field, or sitting so thick together, that every stock is blue with tempting plumage.

But the pistol is discharged for a fowling-piece—brown and rusty, with a slight crack probably in the muzzle, and a lock out of all proportion to the barrel. Then the young shooter aspires at halfpennies thrown up into the air—and generally hit, for there is never wanting an apparent dent in copper metal; and thence he mounts to the glancing and skimming swallow, a

household bird, and therefore to be held sacred, but shot at on the excuse of its being next to impossible to hit him —an opinion strengthened into belief by several summers' practice. But the small brown and white marten wheeling through below the bridge, or along the many-holed red sand-bank, is admitted by all boys to be fair game—. and still more, the long-winged legless black devilet, that, if it falls to the ground, cannot rise again, and therefore screams wheeling round the corners and battlements of towers and castles, or far out even of cannon shot, gambols in companies of hundreds, and regiments of a thousand, aloft in the evening ether, within the orbit of the eagle's flight. It seems to boyish eyes, that the creatures near the earth, when but little blue sky is seen between the specks and the wallflowers growing on the coign of vantage—the signal is given to fire; but the devilets are too high in heaven to smell the sulphur. The starling whips with a shrill cry into his nest, and nothing falls to the ground but a tiny bit of mossy mortar, inhabited by a spider!

But the Day of Days arrives at last, when the schoolboy, or rather the college boy, returning to his rural vacation, (for in Scotland college winters tread close, too close, on the heels of academies,) has a gun—a gun in a case—a double-barrel too—of his own—and is provided with a license, probably without any other qualification than that of hit or miss. On some portentous morning he effulges with the sun in velveteen jacket and breeches of the same—many-buttoned gaiters, and an unkerchiefed throat. 'Tis the fourteenth of Septem-

ber, and lo! a pointer at his heels—Ponto, of course—a game-bag like a beggar's wallet at his side—destined to be at eve as full of charity—and all the paraphernalia of an accomplished sportsman. Proud, were she to see the sight, would be the "mother that bore him;" the heart of that old sportsman, his daddy, would sing for joy! The chained mastiff in the yard yowls his admiration; the servant lasses uplift the pane of their garret, and, with suddenly withdrawn blushes, titter their delight in their rich paper curls and pure night-clothes. Rab Roger, who has been cleaning out the barn, comes forth to partake of the caulker; and away go the footsteps of the old poacher and his pupil through the autumnal rime, off to the uplands, where—for it is one of the earliest of harvests—there is scarcely a single acre of standing corn. The turnip fields are bright green with hope and expectation—and coveys are couching on lazy beds beneath the potato-shaw. Every high hedge, ditch-guarded on either side, shelters its own brood—imagination hears the whir shaking the dewdrops from the broom on the brae—and first one bird and then another, and then the remaining number, in itself no contemptible covey, seems to fancy's ear to spring single, or in clouds, from the coppice brushwood with here and there an intercepting standard tree.

Poor Ponto is much to be pitied. Either having a cold in his nose, or having ante-breakfasted by stealth on a red herring, he can scent nothing short of a badger, and, every other field, he starts in horror, shame, and amazement, to hear himself, without having attended to

his points, enclosed in a whirring covey. He is still duly taken between those inexorable knees; out comes the speck-and-span new dog-whip, heavy enough for a horse; and the yowl of the patient is heard over the whole parish. Mothers press their yet unchastised infants to their breasts; and the schoolmaster, fastening a knowing eye on dunce and ne'erdoweel, holds up, in silent warning, the terror of the taws. Frequent flogging will cowe the spirit of the best man and dog in Britain. Ponto travels now in fear and trembling but a few yards from his tyrant's feet, till, rousing himself to the sudden scent of something smelling strongly, he draws slowly and beautifully, and

"There fix'd, a perfect semicircle stands."

Up runs the Tyro ready-cocked, and, in his eagerness, stumbling among the stubble, when, hark and lo! the gabble of grey goslings, and the bill-protruded hiss of goose and gander! Bang goes the right-hand barrel at Ponto, who now thinks it high time to be off to the tune of "ower the hills and far awa'," while the young gentleman, half-ashamed and half-incensed, half-glad and half-sorry, discharges the left-hand barrel, with a highly improper curse, at the father of the feathered family before him, who receives the shot like a ball in his breast, throws a somerset quite surprising for a bird of his usual habits, and, after biting the dust with his bill, and thumping it with his bottom, breathes an eternal farewell to this sublunary scene—and leaves himself to be paid for at the rate of eighteenpence a pound to his

justly irritated owner, on whose farm he had led a long, and not only harmless, but honourable and useful life.

It is nearly as impossible a thing as we know, to borrow a dog about the time the sun has reached his meridian, on the First Day of the Partridges. Ponto by this time has sneaked, unseen by human eye, into his kennel, and coiled himself up into the arms of "tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." A farmer makes offer of a colley, who, from numbering among his paternal ancestors a Spanish pointer, is quite a Don in his way among the cheepers, and has been known in a turnip field to stand in an attitude very similar to that of setting. Luath has no objection to a frolic over the fields, and plays the part of Ponto to perfection. At last he catches sight of a covey basking, and, leaping in upon them open-mouthed, dispatches them right and left, even like the famous dog Billy killing rats in the pit at Westminster. The birds are bagged with a gentle remonstrance, and Luath's exploit rewarded with a whang of cheese. Elated by the pressure on his shoulder, the young gentleman laughs at the idea of pointing; and fires away, like winking, at every uprise of birds, near or remote; works a miracle by bringing down three at a time, that chanced, unknown to him, to be crossing, and, wearied with such slaughter, lends his gun to the attendant farmer, who can mark down to an inch, and walks up to the dropped pout as if he could kick her up with his foot; and thus the bag in a few hours is half full of feathers; while, to close with eclat the sport of the day, the cunning elder takes him to a bramble bush,

in a wall nook, at the edge of a wood, and returning the gun into his hands, shows him poor pussy sitting with open eyes, fast asleep! The pellets are in her brain, and turning herself over, she crunkles out to her full length, like a piece of untwisting Indian rubber, and is dead. The posterior pouch of the jacket, yet unstained by blood, yawns to receive her—and in she goes plump; paws, ears, body, feet, fud, and all—while Luath, all the way home to the Mains, keeps snoking at the red drops oozing through; for well he knows, in summer's heat and winter's cold, the smell of pussy, whether sitting beneath a tuft of withered grass on the brae, or burrowed beneath a snow wreath. A hare, we certainly must say, in spite of haughtier sportsman's scorn, is, when sitting, a most satisfactory shot.

But let us trace no further thus, step by step, the Pilgrim's Progress. Look at him now—a finished sportsman—on the moors—the bright black boundless Dalwhinnie moors, stretching away, by long Loch Erricht side, into the dim and distant day that hangs, with all its clouds, over the bosom of far Loch Rannoch. Is that the pluffer at partridge-pouts who had nearly been the death of poor Ponto? Lord Kennedy himself might take a lesson now from the straight and steady style in which, on the mountain brow, and up to the middle in heather, he brings his Manton to the deadly level! More unerring eye never glanced along brown barrel! Finer forefinger never touched a trigger! Follow him a whole day, and not one wounded bird. All most beautifully arrested on their flight by instantaneous death! Down

dropped right and left, like lead on the heather—old cock and hen, singled out among the orphaned brood, as calmly as a cook would do it in the larder from among a pile of plumage. No random shot within—no needless shot out of distance—covered every feather before stir of finger—and body, back, and brain, pierced, broken, shattered! And what perfect pointers! There they stand, still as death—yet instinct with life—the whole half-dozen! Mungo, the black-tanned—Don, the red-spotted—Clara, the snow-white—Primrose, the pale yellow—Basto, the bright brown, and Nimrod, in his coat of many colours, often seen afar through the mists like a meteor.

So much for the Angler's and the Shooter's Progress—now briefly for the Hunter's. Hunting, in this country, unquestionably commences with cats. Few cottages without a cat. If you do not find her on the mouse watch at the gable end of the house just at the corner, take a solar observation, and by it look for her on bank or brae—somewhere about the premises—if unsuccessful, peep into the byre, and up through a hole among the dusty divots of the roof, and chance is you see her eyes glittering far-ben in the gloom; but if she be not there either, into the barn and up on the mow, and surely she is on the straw or on the baulks below the kipples. No. Well, then, let your eye travel along the edge of that little wood behind the cottage—ay, yonder she is!—but she sees both you and your two terriers—one rough and the other smooth—and, slinking away through a gap in the old hawthorn hedge in among the hazels, she either

lies *perdu*, or is up a fir-tree almost as high as the magpie's or corby's nest.

Now—observe—shooting cats is one thing—and hunting them is another—and shooting and hunting, though they may be united, are here treated separately; so, in the present case, the cat makes her escape. But get her watching birds—young larks, perhaps, walking on the lea—or young linnets hanging on the broom—down by yonder in the holm lands, where there are no trees, except indeed that one glorious single tree, the Golden Oak, and he is guarded by Glowrer, and then what a most capital chase! Stretching herself up with crooked back, as if taking a yawn—off she jumps, with tremendous spangs, and tail, thickened with fear and anger, perpendicular. Youf—youf—youf—go the terriers—head over heels perhaps in their fury—and are not long in turning her—and bringing her to bay at the hedge-root, all ablaze and abristle. A she-devil incarnate!—Hark—all at once now strikes up a trio—Catalani caterwauling the treble—Glowrer taking the bass—and Tearer the tenor—a cruel concert cut short by a squalling throttler. Away—away along the holm—and over the knowe—and into the wood—for lo! the gudewife, brandishing a besom, comes flying demented without her mutch, down to the murder of her tabby—her son, a stout stripling, is seen skirting the potato-field to intercept our flight—and, most formidable of all foes, the Man of the House himself, in his shirt-sleeves and flail in his hand, bolts from the barn, down the croft, across the burn, and up the brae, to cut us off from the Manse.

The hunt's up—and 'tis a capital steeple-chase. Disperse—disperse! Down the hill, Jack—up the hill, Gill—dive the dell, Kit—thread the wood, Pat—a hundred yards' start is a great matter—a stern chase is always a long chase—schoolboys are generally in prime wind—the old man begins to puff, and blow, and snort, and put his paws to his paunch—the son is thrown out by a double of dainty Davy's—and the "sair begrutten mither" is gathering up the torn and tattered remains of Tortoise-shell Tabby, and invoking the vengeance of heaven and earth on her pitiless murderers. Some slight relief to her bursting and breaking heart to vow, that she will make the minister hear of it on the deafest side of his head—ay, even if she have to break in upon him sitting on Saturday night, getting aff by rote his fushionless sermon, in his ain study.

Now, gentle reader, again observe, that though we have now described, *con amore*, a most cruel case of cat-killing, in which we certainly did play a most aggravated part, some Sixty Years since, far indeed are we from recommending such wanton barbarity to the rising generation. We are not inditing a homily on humanity to animals, nor have we been appointed to succeed the Rev. Dr Somerville of Currie, the great Patentee of the Safety Double Bloody Barrel, to preach the annual Gibsonian sermon on that subject—we are simply stating certain matters of fact, illustrative of the rise and progress of the love of pastime in the soul, and leave our readers to draw the moral. But may we be permitted to say, that the naughtiest schoolboys often make the

most pious men; that it does not follow, according to the wise saws and modern instances of prophetic old women of both sexes, that he who in boyhood has worried a cat with terriers, will, in manhood, commit murder on one of his own species; or that peccadilloes are the progenitors of capital crimes. Nature allows to growing lads a certain range of wickedness, *sans peur et sans reproche.* She seems, indeed, to whistle into their ear, to mock ancient females—to laugh at Quakers—to make mouths at a decent man and his wife riding double to church—the matron's thick legs ludicrously bobbing from the pillion, kept firm on Dobbin's rump by her bottom, "*ponderibus librata suis,*"—to tip the wink to young women during sermon on Sunday—and on Saturday, most impertinently to kiss them, whether they will or no, on high-road or by-path—and to perpetrate many other little nameless enormities.

No doubt, at the time, such things will wear rather a suspicious character; and the boy who is detected in the fact, must be punished by pawmy, or privation, or imprisonment from play. But when punished, he is of course left free to resume his atrocious career; nor is it found that he sleeps a whit the less soundly, or shrieks for Heaven's mercy in his dreams. Conscience is not a craven. Groans belong to guilt. But fun and frolic, even when trespasses, are not guilt; and though a cat have nine lives, she has but one ghost—and that will haunt no house where there are terriers. What! surely if you have the happiness of being a parent, you would not wish your only boy—your son and heir—the blended

image of his mother's loveliness and his father's manly beauty—to be a smug, smooth, prim, and proper prig, with his hair always combed down on his forehead, hands always unglaured, and without spot or blemish on his white-thread stockings? You would not wish him, surely, to be always moping and musing in a corner with a good book held close to his nose—botanizing with his maiden aunts—doing the pretty at tea-tables with tabbies, in handing round the short-bread, taking cups, and attending to the kettle—telling tales on all naughty boys and girls—laying up his penny a-week pocket-money in a penny pig—keeping all his clothes neatly folded up in an untumbled drawer—having his own peg for his uncrushed hat—saying his prayers precisely as the clock strikes nine, while his companions are yet at blind-man's buff—and puffed up every Sabbath-eve by the parson's praises of his uncommon memory for a sermon—while all the other boys are scolded for having fallen asleep before Tenthly? You would not wish him, surely, to write sermons himself at his tender years, nay—even to be able to give you chapter and verse for every quotation from the Bible? No. Better far that he should begin early to break your heart, by taking no care even of his Sunday clothes—blotting his copy—impiously pinning pieces of paper to the Dominie's tail, who to him was a second father—going to the fishing not only without leave but against orders—bathing in the forbidden pool, where the tailor was drowned—drying powder before the school-room fire, and blowing himself and two crack-skulled cronies to the ceiling—tying kettles to the tails

of dogs—shooting an old woman's laying hen—galloping bare-backed shelties down stony steeps—climbing trees to the slenderest twig on which bird could build, and up the tooth-of-time-indented sides of old castles after wall-flowers and starlings—being run away with in carts by colts against turnpike gates—buying bad ballads from young gipsy-girls, who, on receiving a sixpence, give ever so many kisses in return, saying, "Take your change out of that;"—on a borrowed broken-knee'd pony, with a switch-tail—a devil for galloping—not only attending country-races for a saddle and collar, but entering for and winning the prize—dancing like a devil in barns at kirns—seeing his blooming partner home over the blooming heather, most perilous adventure of all in which virgin-puberty can be involved—fighting with a rival in corduroy breeches, and poll shorn beneath a caup, till his eyes just twinkle through the swollen blue—and, to conclude "this strange eventful history," once brought home at one o'clock in the morning, God knows whence or by whom, and found by the shrieking servant, sent out to listen for him in the moonlight, dead-drunk on the gravel at the gate!

Nay, start not, parental reader—nor, in the terror of anticipation, send, without loss of a single day, for your son at a distant academy, mayhap pursuing even such another career. Trust thou to the genial, gracious, and benign *vis medicatrix naturæ*. What though a few clouds bedim and deform "the innocent brightness of the new-born day?" Lo! how splendid the meridian ether! What though the frost seem to blight the beauty of the

budding and blowing rose? Look how she revives beneath dew, rain, and sunshine, till your eyes can even scarce endure the lustre! What though the waters of the sullen fen seem to pollute the snow of the swan? They fall off from her expanded wings, and, pure as a spirit, she soars away, and descends into her own silver lake, stainless as the water-lilies floating round her breast. And shall the immortal soul suffer lasting contamination from the transient chances of its nascent state—in this, less favoured than material and immaterial things that perish? No—it is undergoing endless transmigrations,—every hour a being different, yet the same—dark stains blotted out—rueful inscriptions effaced—many an erasure of impressions once thought permanent, but soon altogether forgotten—and vindicating, in the midst of the earthly corruption in which it is immersed, its own celestial origin, character, and end, often flickering, or seemingly blown out, like a taper in the wind, but all at once self-reillumined, and shining in inextinguishable and self-fed radiance—like a star in heaven.

Therefore, bad as boys too often are—and a disgrace to the mother who bore them—the cradle in which they were rocked—the nurse by whom they were suckled—the schoolmaster by whom they were flogged—and the hangman by whom it was prophesied they were to be executed—wait patiently for a few years, and you will see them all transfigured—one into a preacher of such winning eloquence, that he almost persuades all men to

be Christians—another into a parliamentary orator, who commands the applause of listening senates, and

"Reads his history in a nation's eyes"

—one into a painter, before whose thunderous heavens the storms of Poussin "pale their ineffectual fires"—another into a poet composing and playing, side by side, on his own peculiar harp, in a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth—one into a great soldier, who, when Wellington is no more, shall, for the freedom of the world, conquer a future Waterloo—another who, hoisting his flag on the "mast of some tall ammiral," shall, like Eliab Harvey in the Temeraire, lay two three-deckers on board at once, and clothe some now nameless peak or promontory in immortal glory, like that shining on Trafalgar.

Well, then, after cat-killing comes Coursing. Cats have a look of hares—kittens of leverets—and they are all called Pussy. The terriers are useful still, preceding the line like skirmishers, and with finest noses startling the mawkin from bracken-bush or rush bower, her sky-light garret in the old quarry, or her brown study in the brake. Away with your coursing on Marlborough downs, where huge hares are seen squatted from a distance, and the sleek dogs, disrobed of their gaudy trappings, are let slip by a Tryer, running for cups and collars before lords and ladies, and squires of high and low degree—a pretty pastime enough, no doubt, in its way, and a splendid cavalcade. But will it for a moment compare with the sudden and all-unlooked-for start of the "auld

witch" from the bunweed-covered lea, when the throat of every pedestrian is privileged to cry "halloo—halloo—halloo"—and whipcord-tailed greyhound and hairy lurcher, without any invidious distinction of birth or bearing, lay their deep breasts to the sward at the same moment, to the same instinct, and brattle over the brae after the disappearing Ears, laid flat at the first sight of her pursuers, as with retroverted eyes she turns her face to the mountain, and seeks the cairn only a little lower than the falcon's nest."

What signifies any sport in the open air, except in congenial scenery of earth and heaven? Go, thou gentle Cockney! and angle in the New River;—but, bold Englishman, come with us and try a salmon-cast in the old Tay. Go, thou gentle Cockney! and course a suburban hare in the purlieus of Blackheath;—but, bold Englishman, come with us and course an animal that never heard a city-bell, by day a hare, by night an old woman, that loves the dogs she dreads, and, hunt her as you will with a leash and a half of lightfoots, still returns at dark to the same form in the turf-dike of the garden of the mountain cottage. The children, who love her as their own eyes—for she has been as a pet about the family, summer and winter, since that chubby-cheeked urchin, of some five years old, first began to swing in his self-rocking cradle—will scarcely care to see her started—nay, one of two of the wickedest among them will join in the halloo; for often, ere this, "has she cheated the very jowlers, and lauched ower her shouther at the lang dowgs walloping ahint her, sair forfaquhen, up the benty

brae—and it's no the day that she's gaun to be killed by Rough Robin, or smooth Spring, or the red Bick, or the hairy Lurcher—though a' fowr be let lowse on her at ance, and ye surround her or she rise." What are your great big fat lazy English hares, ten or twelve pounds and upwards, who have the food brought to their very mouth in preserves, and, are out of breath with five minutes' scamper among themselves—to the middle-sized, hard-hipped, wiry-backed, steel-legged, long-winded mawkins of Scotland, that scorn to taste a leaf of a single cabbage in the wee moorland yardie that shelters them, but prey in distant fields, take a breathing every gloaming along the mountain-breast, untired as young eagles ringing the sky for pastime, and before the dogs seem not so much scouring for life as for pleasure, with such an air of freedom, liberty, and independence, do they fling up the moss and cock their fuds in the faces of their pursuers. Yet stanch are they to the spine—strong in bone, and sound in bottom—see, see how Tickler clears that twenty-feet moss-hag at a single spang like a bird—tops that hedge that would turn any hunter that ever stabled in Melton Mowbray—and then, at full speed northward, moves as upon a pivot within his own length, and close upon his haunches, without losing a foot, off within a point of due south. A kennel! He never was and never will be in a kennel all his free joyful days. He has walked and run—and leaped and swam about—at his own will, ever since he was nine days old—and he would have done so sooner had he had any eyes. None of your stinking cracklets for him—he

takes his meals with the family, sitting at the right hand of the master's eldest son. He sleeps in any bed of the house he chooses; and, though no Methodist, he goes every third Sunday to church. That is the education of a Scottish greyhound—and the consequence is, that you may pardonably mistake him for a deer dog from Badenoch or Lochaber, and no doubt in the world that he would rejoice in a glimpse of the antlers on the weather gleam,

> "Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode
> To his hills that encircle the sea."

This may be called roughing it—slovenly—coarse—rude—artless—unscientific. But we say no—it is your only coursing. Gods! with what a bounding bosom the schoolboy salutes the dawning of the cool—clear—crisp, yes, crisp October morn, (for there has been a slight frost, and the almost leafless hedgerows are all glittering with rime;) and, little time lost at dress or breakfast, crams the luncheon into his pouch, and away to the Trysting-hill Farmhouse, which he fears the gamekeeper and his grews will have left ere he can run across the two long Scotch miles of moor between him and his joy! With step elastic, he feels flying along the sward as from a spring-board; like a roe, he clears the burns and bursts his way through the brakes; panting, not from breathlessness but anxiety, he lightly leaps the garden fence without a pole, and lo, the green jacket of one huntsman, the red jacket of another, on the plat before the door, and two or three tall rawboned poachers—and there is mirth and music, fun and frolic, and the very

soul of enterprise, adventure, and desperation, in that word—while tall and graceful stand the black, the brindled, and the yellow breed, with keen yet quiet eyes, prophetic of their destined prey, and though motionless now as stone statues of hounds at the feet of Meleager, soon to launch like lightning at the loved halloo!

Out comes the gudewife with her own bottle from the press in the spence, with as big a belly and broad a bottom as her own, and they are no trifle—for the worthy woman has been making much beef for many years, is moreover in the family way, and surely this time there will be twins at least—and pours out a canty caulker for each crowing crony, beginning with the gentle, and ending with the semple, that is our and herself; and better speerit never steamed in sma' still. She offers another with "hinny," by way of Athole brose; but it is put off till evening, for coursing requires a clear head, and the same sobriety then adorned our youth that now dignifies our old age. The gudeman, although an elder of the kirk, and with as grave an aspect as suits that solemn office, needs not much persuasion to let the flail rest for one day, anxious though he be to show the first aits in the market; and donning his broad blue bonnet, and the shortest-tailed auld coat he can find, and taking his kent in his hand, he gruffly gives Wully his orders for a' things about the place, and sets off with the younkers for a holyday. Not a man on earth who has not his own pastime, depend on't, austere as he may look; and 'twould be well for this wicked world if no elder in it had a "sin

that maist easily beset him," worse than what Gibby Watson's wife used to call his "awfu' fondness for the Grews!"

And who that loves to walk or wander over the green earth, except indeed it merely be some sonnetteer or ballad-monger, if he had time and could afford it, and lived in a tolerably open country, would not keep, at the very least, three greyhounds? No better eating than a hare, though old blockhead Burton—and he was a blockhead, if blockhead ever there was one in this world—in his Anatomy, chooses to call it melancholy meat. Did he ever, by way of giving dinner a fair commencement, swallow a tureen of hare-soup with half-a-peck of mealy potatoes? If ever he did—and notwithstanding called hare melancholy meat, there can be no occasion whatever for now wishing him any further punishment. If he never did—then he was on earth the most unfortunate of men. England—as you love us and yourself—cultivate hare-soup, without for a moment dreaming of giving up roasted hare well stuffed with stuffing, jelly sauce being handed round on a large trencher. But there is no such thing as melancholy meat—neither fish, flesh, nor fowl—provided only there be enough of it. Otherwise, the daintiest dish drives you to despair. But independently of spit, pot, and pan, what delight in even daunering about the home farm seeking for a hare? It is quite an art or science. You must consult not only the wind and weather of to-day, but of the night before—and of every day and night back to last Sunday, when probably

you were prevented by the rain from going to church. Then hares shift the sites of their country seats every season. This month they love the fallow field—that, the stubble; this, you will see them, almost without looking for them, big and brown on the bare stony upland lea—that, you must have a hawk's eye in your head to discern, discover, detect them, like birds in their nests, embowered below the bunweed or the bracken; they choose to spend this week in a wood impervious to wet or wind—that, in a marsh too plashy for the plover; now you may depend on finding madam at home in the sulks within the very heart of a bramble-bush or dwarf black-thorn thicket, while the squire cocks his fud at you from the top of a knowe open to blasts from all the airts;—in short, he who knows at all times where to find a hare, even if he knew not one single thing else but the way to his mouth, cannot be called an ignorant man—is probably a better-informed man in the long run than the friend on his right, discoursing about the Turks, the Greeks, the Portugals, and all that sort of thing, giving himself the lie on every arrival of his daily paper. We never yet knew an old courser, (him of the Sporting Annals included,) who was not a man both of abilities and virtues. But where were we?—at the Trysting-hill Farmhouse, jocularly called Hunger-them-Out.

Line is formed, and with measured steps we march towards the hills—for we ourselves are the schoolboy, bold, bright, and blooming as the rose—fleet of foot almost as the very antelope—Oh! now, alas! dim and

withered as a stalk from which winter has swept all the blossoms—slow as the sloth along the ground—spindle-shanked as a lean and slippered pantaloon!.

> "O heaven! that from our bright and shining years
> Age would but take the things youth heeded not!"

An old shepherd meets us on the long sloping rushy ascent to the hills—and putting his brown withered finger to his gnostic nose, intimates that she is in her old form behind the dike—and the noble dumb animals, with pricked-up ears and brandished tail, are aware that her hour is come. Plash, plash, through the marsh, and then on the dry furze beyond, you see her large dark-brown eyes—Soho, soho, soho—Halloo, halloo, halloo—for a moment the seemingly horned creature appears to dally with the danger, and to linger ere she lays her lugs on her shoulder, and away, like thoughts pursuing thoughts—away fly hare and hounds towards the mountain.

Stand all still for a minute—for not a bush the height of our knee to break our view—and is not that brattling burst up the brae "beautiful exceedingly," and sufficient to chain in admiration the beatings of the rudest gazer's heart? Yes; of all beautiful sights—none more, none so much so, as the miraculous motion of a four-footed wild animal, changed at once, from a seeming inert sod or stone, into flight fleet as that of the falcon's wing! Instinct against instinct! fear and ferocity in one flight! Pursuers and pursued bound together, in every turning and twisting of their career, by the operation of two headlong passions! Now they are all three upon her—and

she dies! No! glancing aside, like a bullet from a wall, she bounds almost at a right angle from her straight course—and, for a moment, seems to have made good her escape. Shooting headlong one over the other, all three, with erected tails, suddenly bring themselves up—like racing barks when down goes the helm, and one after and another, bowsprit and boom almost entangled, rounds the buoy, and again bears up on the starboard tack upon a wind—and in a close line, head to heel, so that you might cover them all with a sheet—again, all open-mouthed on her haunches, seem to drive, and go with her over the cliff.

We are all on foot—and pray what horse could gallop through among all these quagmires, over all the hags in these peat-mosses, over all the water-cressy and puddocky ditches, sinking soft on hither and thither side, even to the two-legged leaper's ankle or knee—up that hill on the perpendicular strewn with flint-shivers—down these loose-hanging cliffs—through that brake of old stunted birches with stools hard as iron—over that mile of quaking muir where the plover breeds—and—finally—up—up—up to where the dwarfed heather dies away among the cinders, and in winter you might mistake a flock of ptarmigan for a patch of snow?

The thing is impossible—so we are all on foot—and the fleetest keeper that ever footed it in Scotland shall not in a run of three miles give us sixty yards. "Ha! Peter the wild boy, how are you off for wind?"—we exultingly exclaim, in giving Red-jacket the go-by on the bent. But see—see—they are bringing her back again

down the Red Mount—glancing aside, she throws them all three out—yes, all three, and few enow too, though fair play be a jewel—and ere they can recover, she is a-head a hundred yards up the hill. There is a beautiful trial of bone and bottom! Now one, and then another, takes almost imperceptibly the lead; but she steals away from them inch by inch—beating them all blind—and, suddenly disappearing—Heaven knows how—leaves them all in the lurch. With out-lolling tongues, hanging heads, panting sides, and drooping tails, they come one by one down the steep, looking somewhat sheepish, and then lie down together on their sides, as if indeed about to die in defeat. She has carried away her cocked fud unscathed for the third time, from Three of the Best in all broad Scotland—nor can there any longer be the smallest doubt in the world, in the minds of the most sceptical, that she is—what all the country-side have long known her to be—a Witch.

From cat-killing to Coursing, we have seen that the transition is easy in the order of nature—and so is it from coursing to Fox-Hunting—by means, however, of a small intermediate step—the Harriers. Musical is a pack of harriers as a peal of bells. How melodiously they ring changes in the woods, and in the hollow of the mountains! A level country we have already consigned to merited contempt, (though there is no rule without an exception; and, as we shall see by and by, there is one too here,) and commend us, even with harriers, to the ups and downs of the pastoral or silvan heights. If old or indolent, take your station on a heaven-kissing hill,

and hug the echoes to your heart. Or, if you will ride, then let it be on a nimble galloway of some fourteen hands, that can gallop a good pace on the road, and keep sure footing on bridle-paths, or upon the pathless braes —and by judicious horsemanship, you may meet the pack at many a loud-mouthed burst, and haply be not far out at the death. But the schoolboy—and the shepherd—and the whipper-in—as each hopes for favour from his own Diana—let them all be on foot—and have studied the country for every imaginable variety that can occur in the winter's campaign. One often hears of a cunning old fox—but the cunningest old fox is a simpleton to the most guileless young hare. What deceit in every double! What calculation in every squat! Of what far more complicated than Cretan Labyrinth is the creature, now hunted for the first time, sitting in the centre! a-listening the baffled roar! Now into the pool she plunges, to free herself from the fatal scent that lures on death. Now down the torrent course she runs and leaps, to cleanse it from her poor paws, fur-protected from the sharp flints that lame the fiends that so sorely beset her, till many limp along in their own blood. Now along the coping of stone walls she crawls and scrambles—and now ventures from the wood along the frequented high-road, heedless of danger from the front, so that she may escape the horrid growling in the rear. Now into the pretty little garden of the wayside, or even the village cot, she creeps, as if to implore protection from the innocent children, or the nursing mother. Yes, she will even seek refuge in the sanctuary of the cradle. The terrier drags

her out from below a tombstone, and she dies in the churchyard. The hunters come reeking and reeling on, we ourselves among the number—and to the winding horn that echoes reply from the walls of the house of worship—and now, in momentary contrition,

> " Drops a sad, serious tear upon our playful pen!"

and we bethink ourselves—alas! all in vain, for

> " *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*"—

of these solemn lines of the poet of peace and humanity:—

> " One lesson, reader, let us two divide,
> Taught by what nature shows and what conceals,
> Never to blend our pleasure and our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

It is next to impossible to reduce fine poetry to practice—so let us conclude with a panegyric on Fox-Hunting. The passion for this pastime is the very strongest that can possess the heart—nor, of all the heroes of antiquity, is there one to our imagination more poetical than Nimrod. His whole character is given, and his whole history, in two words—Mighty Hunter. That he hunted the fox is not probable; for the sole aim and end of his existence was not to exterminate—that would have been cutting his own throat—but to thin man-devouring wild beasts—the Pards—with Leo at their head. But in a land like this, where not even a wolf has existed for centuries—nor a wild boar—the same spirit that would have driven the British youth on the tusk and paw of the

Lion and the Tiger, mounts them in scarlet on such steeds as never neighed before the flood, nor "*summered* high in bliss" on the sloping pastures of undeluged Ararat—and gathers them together in gallant array on the edge of the cover,

> "When first the hunter's startling horn is heard
> Upon the golden hills."

What a squadron of cavalry! What fiery eyes and flaming nostrils—betokening with what ardent passion the noble animals will revel in the chase! Bay, brown, black, dun, chestnut, sorrel, grey—of all shades and hues —and every courser distinguished by his own peculiar character of shape and form—yet all blending harmoniously as they crown the mount; so that a painter would only have to group and colour them as they stand, nor lose, if able to catch them, one of the dazzling lights or deepening shadows streamed on them from that sunny, yet not unstormy sky.

You read in books of travels and romances, of Barbs and Arabs galloping in the desert—and well doth Sir Walter speak of Saladin at the head of his Saracenic chivalry; but take our word for it, great part of all such descriptions are mere falsehood or fudge. Why in the devil's name should dwellers in the desert always be going at full speed? And how can that full speed be any thing more than a slow heavy hand-gallop at the best, the barbs being up to the belly at every stroke? They are always, it is said, in high condition—but we, who know something about horse-flesh, give that assertion

the lie. They have seldom any thing either to eat or drink; are lean as church-mice; and covered with clammy sweat before they have ambled a league from the tent. And then such a set of absurd riders, with knees up to their noses, like so many tailors riding to Brentford, *viâ* the deserts of Arabia! Such bits, such bridles, and such saddles! But the whole set-out, rider and ridden, accoutrements and all, is too much for one's gravity, and must occasion a frequent laugh to the wild ass as he goes braying unharnessed by. But look there! Arabian blood, and British bone! Not bred in and in to the death of all the fine strong animal spirits—but blood intermingled and interfused by twenty crosses, nature exulting in each successive produce, till her power can no further go, and in yonder glorious grey,

"Gives the world assurance of a horse!"

Form the Three Hundred into squadron, or squadrons, and in the hand of each rider a sabre alone, none of your lances, all bare his breast but for the silver-laced blue, the gorgeous uniform of the Hussars of England—confound all cuirasses and cuirassiers!—let the trumpet sound a charge, and ten thousand of the proudest of the Barbaric chivalry be opposed with spear and scimitar—and through their snow-ranks will the Three Hundred go like thaw—splitting them into dissolution with the noise of thunder.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it; and where, we ask, were the British cavalry ever overthrown? And how could the great north-country horse-coupers

perform their contracts, but for the triumphs of the Turf? Blood—blood there must be, either for strength, or speed, or endurance. The very heaviest cavalry—the Life Guards and the Scots Greys, and all other dragoons, must have blood. But without racing and fox-hunting, where could it be found? Such pastimes nerve one of the arms of the nation when in battle; but for them 'twould be palsied. What better education, too, not only for a horse, but his rider, before playing a bloodier game in his first war campaign? Thus he becomes demicorpsed with the noble animal; and what easy, equable motion to him is afterwards a charge over a wide level plain, with nothing in the way but a few regiments of flying Frenchmen! The hills and dales of merry England have been the best riding-school to her gentlemen—her gentlemen who have not lived at home at ease—but, with Paget, and Stewart, and Seymour, and Cotton, and Somerset, and Vivian, have left their hereditary halls, and all the peaceful pastimes pursued among the silvan scenery, to try the mettle of their steeds, and cross swords with the vaunted Gallic chivalry; and still have they been in the shock victorious; witness the skirmish that astonished Napoleon at Saldanha—the overthrow that uncrowned him at Waterloo!

"Well, do you know, that, after all you have said, Mr North, I cannot understand the passion and the pleasure of fox-hunting. It seems to me both cruel and dangerous."

Cruelty! Is there cruelty in laying the rein on their necks, and delivering them up to the transport of their

high condition—for every throbbing vein is visible—at the first full burst of that maddening cry, and letting loose to their delight the living thunderbolts? Danger! What danger but of breaking their own legs, necks, or backs, and those of their riders? And what right have you to complain of that, lying all your length, a huge hulking fellow, snoring and snorting half-asleep on a sofa, sufficient to sicken a whole street? What though it be but a smallish, reddish-brown, sharp-nosed animal, with pricked-up ears, and passionately fond of poultry, that they pursue? After the first Tally-ho, Reynard is rarely seen, till he is run in upon—once, perhaps, in the whole run, skirting a wood, or crossing a common. It is an Idea that is pursued, on a whirlwind of horses, to a storm of canine music—worthy, both, of the largest lion that ever leaped among a band of Moors, sleeping at midnight by an extinguished fire on the African sands. There is, we verily believe it, nothing Foxy in the Fancy of one man in all that glorious field of Three Hundred. Once off and away—while wood and welkin rings—and nothing is felt—nothing is imaged in that hurricane flight, but scorn of all obstructions, dikes, ditches, drains, brooks, palings, canals, rivers, and all the impediments reared in the way of so many rejoicing madmen, by nature, art, and science, in an inclosed, cultivated, civilized, and Christian country. There they go—prince and peer, baronet and squire—the nobility and gentry of England, the flower of the men of the earth, each on such a steed as Pollux never reined, nor Philip's warlike son—for could we imagine Bucephalus here, ridden by his

own tamer, Alexander would be thrown out during the very first burst, and glad to find his way dismounted to a village alehouse for a pail of meal and water. Hedges, trees, groves, gardens, orchards, woods, farmhouses, huts, halls, mansions, palaces, spires, steeples, towers, and temples, all go wavering by, each demigod seeing, or seeing them not, as his winged steed skims or labours along, to the swelling or sinking music, now loud as a near regimental band, now faint as an echo. Far and wide over the country are dispersed the scarlet runners —and a hundred villages pour forth their admiring swarms, as the main current of the chase roars by, or disparted runlets float wearied and all astray, lost at last in the perplexing woods. Crash goes the top-timber of the five-barred gate—away over the ears flies the ex-rough-rider in a surprising somerset—after a succession of stumbles, down is the gallant Grey on knees and nose, making sad work among the fallow—Friendship is a fine thing, and the story of Damon and Pythias most affecting indeed—but Pylades eyes Orestes on his back sorely drowned in sludge, and tenderly leaping over him as he lies, claps his hands to his ear, and with a "hark forward, tantivy!" leaves him to remount, lame and at leisure—and ere the fallen has risen and shaken himself, is round the corner of the white village-church, down the dell, over the brook, and close on the heels of the straining pack, all a-yell up the hill crowned by the Squire's Folly. "Every man for himself, and God for us all," is the devout and ruling apothegm of the day. If death befall, what wonder? since man and horse are mortal; but

death loves better a wide soft bed with quiet curtains and darkened windows in a still room, the clergyman in the one corner with his prayers, and the physician in another with his pills, making assurance doubly sure, and preventing all possibility of the dying Christian's escape. Let oak branch smite the too slowly stooping skull, or rider's back not timely levelled with his steed's; let faithless bank give way, and bury in the brook; let hidden drain yield to fore feet and work a sudden wreck; let old coal-pit, with briery mouth, betray; and roaring river bear down man and horse, to cliffs unscalable by the very Welsh goat; let duke's or earl's son go sheer over a quarry twenty feet deep, and as many high; yet "without stop or stay, down the rocky way," the hunter train flows on; for the music grows fiercer and more savage—lo! all that remains together of the pack, in far more dreadful madness than hydrophobia, leaping out of their skins, under insanity from the scent, for Vulpes can hardly now make a crawl of it; and ere he, they, whipper-in, or any one of the other three demoniacs, have time to look in one another's splashed faces, he is torn into a thousand pieces, gobbled up in the general growl; and smug, and smooth, and dry, and warm, and cozey, as he was an hour and twenty-five minutes ago exactly, in his furze bush in the cover—he is now piecemeal in about thirty distinct stomachs; and is he not, pray, well off for sepulture?

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS SPORTING JACKET.

FYTTE SECOND.

We are always unwilling to speak of ourselves, lest we should appear egotistical—for egotism we detest. Yet the sporting world must naturally be anxious to know something of our early history—and their anxiety shall therefore be now assuaged. The truth is, that we enjoyed some rare advantages and opportunities in our boyhood regarding field sports, and grew up, even from that first great era in every Lowlander's life, Breeching-day, not only a fisher but a fowler; and it is necessary that we enter into some interesting details.

There had been from time immemorial, it was understood, in the Manse, a duck-gun of very great length, and a musket that, according to an old tradition, had been out both in the Seventeen and Forty-five. There were ten boys of us, and we succeeded by rotation to gun or musket, each boy retaining possession for a single

day only; but then the shooting season continued all the year. They must have been of admirable materials and workmanship; for neither of them so much as once burst during the Seven Years' War. The musket, who, we have often since thought, must surely rather have been a blunderbuss in disguise, was a perfect devil for kicking when she received her discharge; so much so indeed, that it was reckoned creditable for the smaller boys not to be knocked down by the recoil. She had a very wide mouth—and was thought by us "an awfu' scatterer;" a qualification which we considered of the very highest merit. She carried any thing we chose to put into her—there still being of all her performances a loud and favourable report—balls, buttons, chucky-stanes, slugs, or hail. She had but two faults—she had got addicted, probably in early life, to one habit of burning priming, and to another of hanging fire; habits of which it was impossible, for us at least, to break her by the most assiduous hammering of many a new series of flints; but such was the high place she justly occupied in the affection and admiration of us all, that faults like these did not in the least detract from her general character. Our delight, when she did absolutely and positively and bonâ fide *go off*, was in proportion to the comparative rarity of that occurrence; and as to hanging fire—why we used to let her take her own time, contriving to keep her at the level as long as our strength sufficed, eyes shut perhaps, teeth clenched, face girning, and head slightly averted over the right shoulder, till Muckle-mou'd Meg, who, like most other Scottish

females, took things leisurely, went off at last with an explosion like the blowing up of a rock.

The "Lang Gun," again, was of a much gentler disposition, and, instead of kicking, ran into the opposite extreme on being let off, inclining forwards as if she would follow the shot. We believe, however, this apparent peculiarity arose from her extreme length, which rendered it difficult for us to hold her horizontally—and hence the muzzle being attracted earthward, the entire gun appeared to leave the shoulder of the Shooter. That such is the true theory of the phenomenon seems to be proved by this—that when the "Lang Gun" was, in the act of firing, laid across the shoulders of two boys standing about a yard the one before the other, she kicked every bit as well as the blunderbuss. Her lock was of a very peculiar construction. It was so contrived that, when on full cock, the dog-head, as we used to call it, stood back at least seven inches, and, unless the flint was put in to a nicety, by pulling the trigger you by no means caused any uncovering of the pan, but things in general remained *in statu quo*—and there was perfect silence. She had a worm-eaten stock, into which the barrel seldom was able to get itself fairly inserted; and even with the aid of circumvoluting twine, 'twas always coggly. Thus too, the vizy (*Anglice* sight) generally inclined unduly to one side or the other, and was the cause of all of us every day hitting and hurting objects of whose existence even we were not aware, till alarmed by the lowing or the galloping of cattle on the hills; and we hear now the yell of an old woman in black bonnet

and red cloak, who shook her staff at us like a witch, with the blood running down the furrows of her face, and, with many oaths, maintained that she was murdered. The "Lang Gun" had certainly a strong vomit—and, with slugs or swan-shot, was dangerous at two hundred yards to any living thing. Bob Howie, at that distance arrested the career of a mad dog—a single slug having been sent through the eye into the brain. We wonder if one or both of those companions of our boyhood be yet alive—or, like many other great guns that have since made more noise in the world, fallen a silent prey to the rust of oblivion.

Not a boy in the school had a game certificate—or, as it was called in the parish—"a leeshance." Nor, for a year or two, was such a permit necessary; as we confined ourselves almost exclusively to sparrows. Not that we had any personal animosity to the sparrow individually—on the contrary, we loved him, and had a tame one—a fellow of infinite fancy—with comb and wattles of crimson cloth like a gamecock. But their numbers, without number numberless, seemed to justify the humanest of boys in killing any quantity of sprauchs. Why, they would sometimes settle on the clipped half-thorn and half-beech hedge of the Manse garden in myriads, midge-like; and then out any two of us, whose day it happened to be, used to sally with Muckle-mou'd Meg and the Lang Gun, charged two hands and a finger; and, with a loud shout, startling them from their roost like the sudden casting of a swarm of bees, we let drive into the whir—a shower of feathers was instantly seen

swimming in the air, and flower-bed and onion-bed covered with scores of the mortally wounded old cocks with black heads, old hens with brown, and the pride of the eaves laid low before their first crop of peas! Never was there such a parish for sparrows. You had but to fling a stone into any stack-yard, and up rose a sprauch-shower. The thatch of every cottage was drilled by them like honey-combs. House-spouts were of no use in rainy weather—for they were all choked up by sprauch-nests. At each particular barn-door, when the farmers were at work, you might have thought you saw the entire sparrow population of the parish. Seldom a Sabbath, during pairing, building, breeding, nursing, and training season, could you hear a single syllable of the sermon for their sakes, all a-huddle and a-chirp in the belfry and among the old loose slates. On every stercoraceous deposit on coach, cart, or bridle road, they were busy on grain and pulse; and, in spite of cur and cat, legions embrowned every cottage garden. Emigration itself in many million families would have left no perceptible void; and the inexterminable multitude would have laughed at the Plague.

The other small birds of the parish began to feel their security from our shot, and sung their best, unscared on hedge, bush, and tree. Perhaps, too, for sake of their own sweet strains, we spared the lyrists of Scotland, the linnet and the lark, the one in the yellow broom, the other beneath the rosy cloud—while there was ever a sevenfold red shield before Robin's breast, whether flitting silent as a falling leaf, or trilling his autumnal lay

on the rigging or pointed gable-end of barn or byre. Now and then the large bunting, conspicuous on a top-twig, and proud of his rustic psalmody, tempted his own doom—or the cunning stone-chat, glancing about the old dikes, usually shot at in vain—or yellow-hammer, under the ban of the national superstition, with a drop of the devil's blood beneath his pretty crest, pretty in spite of that cruel creed—or green-finch, too rich in plumage for his poorer song—or shilfa, the beautiful nest-builder, shivering his white-plumed wings in shade and sunshine, in joy the most rapturous, in grief the most despairing of all the creatures of the air—or redpole, balanced on the down of the thistle or flower of the bunweed on the old clovery lea—or, haply twice seen in a season, the very goldfinch himself, a radiant and gorgeous spirit brought on the breeze from afar, and worthy, if only slightly wounded, of being enclosed within a silver cage from Fairy Land.

But we waxed more ambitious as we grew old—and then woe to the rookery on the elm-tree grove! Down dropt the dark denizens in dozens, rebounding with a thud and a skraigh from the velvet moss, which under that umbrage formed firm floor for Titania's feet—while others kept dangling dead or dying by the claws, cheating the crusted pie, and all the blue skies above were intercepted by cawing clouds of distracted parents, now dipping down in despair almost within shot, and now, as if sick of this world, soaring away up into the very heavens, and disappearing to return no more—till sunset should bring silence, and the night air roll off the horrid

smell of sulphur from the desolated bowers; and then indeed would they come all flying back upon their strong instinct, like black-sailed barks before the wind, some from the depth of far-off fir-woods, where they had lain quaking at the ceaseless cannonade, some from the furrows of the new-brairded fields aloof on the uplands, some from deep dell close at hand, and some from the middle of the moorish wilderness.

Happiest of all human homes, beautiful Craig-Hall! For so even now dost thou appear to be—in the rich, deep, mellow, green light of imagination trembling on tower and tree—art thou yet undilapidated and undecayed, in thy old manorial solemnity almost majestical, though even then thou hadst long been tenanted but by a humble farmer's family—people of low degree? The evening-festival of the First Day of the Rooks—nay, scoff not at such an anniversary—was still held in thy ample kitchen—of old the bower of brave lords and ladies bright—while the harper, as he sung his song of love or war, kept his eyes fixed on her who sat beneath the deas. The days of chivalry were gone—and the days had come of curds and cream, and, preferred by some people though not by us, of cream-cheese. Old men and old women, widowers and widows, yet all alike cheerful and chatty at a great age, for often as they near the dead, how more lifelike seem the living! Middle-aged men and middle-aged women, husbands and wives, those sedate, with hair combed straight on their foreheads, sunburnt faces, and horny hands established on their knees —these serene, with countenances many of them not

unlovely—comely all—and with arms decently folded beneath their matronly bosoms—as they sat in their holyday dresses, feeling as if the season of youth had hardly yet flown by, or were, on such a merry meeting, for a blink restored! Boys and virgins—those bold even in their bashfulness—these blushing whenever eyes met eyes—nor would they—nor could they—have spoken in the hush to save their souls; yet ere the evening star arose, many a pretty maiden had, down-looking and playing with the hem of her garment, sung linnet-like her ain favourite auld Scottish sang! and many a sweet sang even then delighted Scotia's spirit, though Robin Burns was but a youth—walking mute among the wild-flowers on the moor—nor aware of the immortal melodies soon to breathe from his impassioned heart!

Of all the year's holydays, not even excepting the First of May, this was the most delightful. The First of May, longed for so passionately from the first peep of the primrose, sometimes came deformed with mist and cloud, or cheerless with whistling winds, or winter-like with a sudden fall of snow. And thus all our hopes were dashed—the roomy hay-waggon remained in its shed—the preparations made for us in the distant moorland farmhouse were vain—the fishing-rods hung useless on the nails—and disconsolate schoolboys sat moping in corners, sorry, ashamed, and angry with Scotland's springs. But though the "leafy month of June" be frequently showery, it is almost always sunny too. Every half hour there is such a radiant blink that the young heart sings aloud for joy; summer rain makes the hair grow,

and hats are of little or no use towards the Longest Day; there is something cheerful even in thunder, if it be not rather too near; the lark has not yet ceased altogether to sing, for he soars over his second nest, unappalled beneath the sablest cloud; the green earth repels from her refulgent bosom the blackest shadows, nor will suffer herself to be saddened in the fulness and brightness of her contentment; through the heaviest flood the blue skies will still be making their appearance with an impatient smile, and all the rivers and burns, with the multitude of their various voices, sing praises unto Heaven.

Therefore, bathing our feet in beauty, we went bounding over the flowery fields and broomy braes to the grove-girdled Craig-Hall. During the long noisy day, we thought not of the coming evening, happy as we knew it was to be; and during the long and almost as noisy evening, we forgot all the pastime of the day. Weeks before, had each of us engaged his partner for the first country dance, by right his own when supper came, and to sit close to him with her tender side, with waist at first stealthily arm-encircled, and at last boldly and almost with proud display. In the churchyard, before or after Sabbath-service, a word whispered into the ear of blooming and blushing rustic sufficed; or if that opportunity failed, the angler had but to step into her father's burnside cottage, and with the contents of his basket leave a tender request, and from behind the gable-end carry away a word, a smile, a kiss, and a waving farewell.

Many a high-roofed hall have we, since those days, seen made beautiful with festoons and garlands, beneath

the hand of taste and genius decorating, for some splendid festival, the abode of the noble expecting a still nobler guest. But oh! what pure bliss, and what profound, was then breathed into the bosom of boyhood from that glorious branch of hawthorn, in the chimney—itself almost a tree, so thick—so deep—so rich its load of blossoms—so like its fragrance to something breathed from heaven—and so transitory in its sweetness too, that as she approached to inhale it, down fell many a snow-flake to the virgin's breath—in an hour all melted quite away! No broom that now-a-days grows on the brae, so yellow as the broom—the golden broom—the broom that seemed still to keep the hills in sunlight long after the sun himself had sunk—the broom in which we first found the lintwhite's nest—and of its petals, more precious than pearls, saw framed a wreath for the dark hair of that dark-eyed girl, an orphan, and melancholy even in her merriment—dark-haired and dark-eyed indeed, but whose forehead, whose bosom, were yet whiter than the driven snow. Greenhouses—conservatories—orangeries—are exquisitely balmy still—and, in presence of these strange plants, one could believe that he had been transported to some rich foreign clime. But now we carry the burden of our years along with us—and that consciousness bedims the blossoms, and makes mournful the balm, as from flowers in some fair burial-place, breathing of the tomb. But oh! that Craig-Hall hawthorn! and oh! that Craig-Hall broom! they send their sweet rich scent so far into the hushed air of memory, that all the weary worn-out weaknesses of age drop from us like a garment, and even now—the flight

of that swallow seems more aerial—more alive with bliss his clay-built nest—the ancient long-ago blue of the sky returns to heaven—not for many a many a long year have we seen so fair—so frail—so transparent and angel-mantle-looking a cloud! The very viol speaks—the very dance responds in Craig-Hall: this—this is the very Festival of the First Day of the Rooks—Mary Mather, the pride of the parish—the county—the land—the earth—is our partner—and long mayest thou, O moon! remain behind thy cloud—when the parting kiss is given—and the love-letter, at that tenderest moment, dropped into her bosom!

But we have lost the thread of our discourse, and must pause to search for it, even like a spinster of old, in the disarranged spindle of one of those pretty little wheels now heard no more in the humble ingle, hushed by machinery clink-clanking with power-looms in every town and city of the land. Another year, and we often found ourselves—alone—or with one chosen comrade; for even then we began to have our sympathies and antipathies, not only with roses and lilies, or to cats and cheese, but with or to the eyes, and looks, and foreheads, and hair, and voices, and motions, and silence, and rest of human beings, loving them with a perfect love—we must not say hating them with a perfect hatred—alone or with a friend, among the mists and marshes of moors, in silent and stealthy search of the solitary curlew, that is, the Whawp! At first sight of his long bill aloft above the rushes, we could hear our heart beating quick time in the desert; at the turning of his neck, the body being yet still, our heart ceased to beat altogether—and

we grew sick with hope when near enough to see the wild beauty of his eye. Unfolded, like a thought, was then the brown silence of the shy creature's ample wings —and with a warning cry he wheeled away upon the wind, unharmed by our ineffectual hail, seen falling far short of the deceptive distance, while his mate that had lain couched—perhaps in her nest of eggs or young, exposed yet hidden—within killing range, half-running, half-flying, flapped herself into flight, simulating lame leg and wounded wing; and the two disappearing together behind the hills, left us in our vain reason thwarted by instinct, to resume with live hopes rising out of the ashes of the dead, our daily-disappointed quest over the houseless mosses. Yet now and then to our steady aim the bill of the whawp disgorged blood—and as we felt the feathers in our hand, and from tip to tip eyed the outstretched wings, Fortune, we felt, had no better boon to bestow, earth no greater triumph.

Hush—stoop—kneel—crawl—for by all our hopes of mercy—a heron—a heron! An eel dangling across his bill! And now the water-serpent has disappeared! From morning dawn hath the fowl been fishing here—perhaps on that very stone—for it is one of those days when eels are a-roaming in the shallows, and the heron knows that they are as likely to pass by that stone as any other—from morning dawn—and 'tis now past meridian, half-past two! Be propitious, oh ye Fates! and never—never—shall he again fold his wings on the edge of his gaping nest, on the trees that overtop the only tower left of the old castle. Another eel! and we too can crawl silent as the sinuous serpent. Flash! Bang!

over he goes dead—no, not dead—but how unlike that unavailing flapping, as head over heels he goes spinning over the tarn, to the serene unsettling of himself from sod or stone, when, his hunger sated, and his craw filled with fish for his far-off brood, he used to lift his blue bulk into the air, and with long depending legs, at first floated away like a wearied thing, but soon, as his plumes felt the current of air homewards flowing, urged swifter and swifter his easy course—laggard and lazy no more—leaving leagues behind him, ere you had shifted your motion in watching his cloudlike career, soon invisible among the woods!

The disgorged eels are returned—some of them alive—to their native element—the mud. And the dead heron floats away before small winds and waves into the middle of the tarn. Where is he—the matchless Newfoundlander—*nomine gaudens* FRO, because white as the froth of the sea? Off with a colley. So—stript with the first intention, we plunge from a rock, and,

> "Though in the scowl of heaven, the tarn
> Grows dark as we are swimming,"

Draco-like, breast-high, we stem the surge, and with the heron floating before us, return to the heather-fringed shore, and give three cheers that startle the echoes, asleep from year's end to year's end, in the Grey-Linn Cairn.

Into the silent twilight of many a wild rock-and-river scene, beautiful and bewildering as the fairy work of sleep, will he find himself brought who knows where to seek the heron in all his solitary haunts. For often when the moors are storm-swept, and his bill would be baffled

by the waves of tarn and loch, he sails away from his swinging-tree, and through some open glade dipping down to the secluded stream, alights within the calm chasm, and folds his wings in the breezeless air. The clouds are driving fast aloft in a carry from the sea—but they are all reflected in that pellucid pool—so perfect the cliff-guarded repose. A better day—a better hour—a better minute for fishing could not have been chosen by Mr Heron, who is already swallowing a par. Another—and another—but something falls from the rock into the water; and suspicious, though unalarmed, he leisurely addresses himself to a short flight up the channel—round that tower-like cliff standing strangely by itself, with a crest of self-sown flowering shrubs; and lo! another vista, if possible, just a degree more silent—more secluded—more solitary—beneath the mid-day night of woods! To shoot thee there—would be as impious as to have killed a sacred Ibis stalking in the shade of an Egyptian temple. Yet it is fortunate for thee—folded up there, as thou art, as motionless as thy sitting-stone—that at this moment we have no fire-arms—for we had heard of a fish-like trout in that very pool, and this—O Heron—is no gun but a rod. Thou believest thyself to be in utter solitude—no sportsman but thyself in the chasm—for the otter, thou knowest, loves not such very rocky rivers; and fish with bitten shoulder seldom lies here—that epicure's tasted prey. Yet within ten yards of thee lies couched thy enemy, who once had a design upon thee, even in the very egg. Our mental soliloquy disturbs not thy watchful sense—

for the air stirs not when the soul thinks, or feels, or fancies about man, bird, or beast. We feel, O Heron! that there is not only humanity—but poetry, in our being. Imagination haunts and possesses us in our pastimes, colouring them even with serious—solemn—and sacred light—and thou assuredly hast something priest-like and ancient in thy look—and about thy light-blue plume robes, which the very elements admire and reverence—the waters wetting them not—nor the winds ruffling—and moreover we love thee—Heron—for the sake of that old castle, beside whose gloom thou utteredst thy first feeble cry! A Ruin nameless, traditionless—sole, undisputed property of Oblivion!

Hurra!—Heron—hurra! why, that was an awkward tumble—and very nearly had we hold of thee by the tail! Didst thou take us for a water-kelpie? A fright like that is enough to leave thee an idiot all the rest of thy life. 'Tis a wonder thou didst not go into fits—but thy nerves must be sorely shaken—and what an account of this adventure will certainly be shrieked unto thy mate, to the music of the creaking boughs! Not, even wert thou a secular bird of ages, wouldst thou ever once again revisit this dreadful place. For fear has a wondrous memory in all dumb creatures—and rather wouldst thou see thy nest die of famine, than seek for fish in this man-monster-haunted pool! Farewell! farewell!

Many are the hundreds of hill and mountain lochs to us as familiarly known, round all their rushy or rocky margins, as that pond there in the garden of Buchanan

Lodge. That pond has but one goose and one gander, and nine goslings—about half-a-dozen trouts, if indeed they have not sickened and died of Nostalgia, missing in the stillness the gurgle of their native Tweed—and a brace of perch, now nothing but prickle. But the lochs —the hill, the mountain lochs now in our mind's eye and our mind's ear,—heaven and earth! the bogs are black with duck, teal, and widgeon—up there "comes for food or play" to the holla of the winds, a wedge of wild geese, piercing the marbled heavens with clamour—and lo! in the very centre of the mediterranean, the Royal Family of the Swans! Up springs the silver sea-trout in the sunshine—see Sir Humphrey!—a salmon—a salmon fresh run in love and glory from the sea!

For how many admirable articles are there themes in the above short paragraph! Duck, teal, and widgeon, wild-geese, swans! And first, duck, teal, and widgeon. There they are, all collected together, without regard to party politics, in their very best attire, as thick as the citizens of Edinburgh, their wives, sweethearts, and children, on the Calton Hill, on the first day of the King's visit to Scotland. As thick, but not so steady—for what swimming about in circles—what ducking and diving is there!—all the while accompanied with a sort of low, thick, gurgling, not unsweet, nor unmusical quackery, the expression of the intense joy of feeding, freedom, and play. Oh! Muckle-mou'd Meg! neither thou nor the "Lang Gun" are of any avail here—for that old drake, who, together with his shadow, on which he seems to be sitting, is almost as big as a boat in the water, the

outermost landward sentinel, near as he seems to be in the deception of the clear frosty air, is yet better than three hundred yards from the shore—and, at safe distance, cocks his eye at the fowler. There is no boat on the loch, and knowing that, how tempting in its unapproachable reeds and rushes, and hut-crested knoll—a hut built perhaps by some fowler, in the olden time—yon central Isle! But be still as a shadow—for lo! a batch of Whig-seceders, paddling all by themselves towards that creek—and as surely as our name is Christopher, in another quarter of an hour, they will consist of killed, wounded, and missing. On our belly—with unhatted head just peering over the knowe—and Muckle mou'd Meg slowly and softly stretched out on the rest, so as not to rustle a windle-strae, we lie motionless as a mawkin, till the coterie collects together for simultaneous dive down to the aquatic plants and insects of the fast-shallowing bay; and, just as they are upon the turn with their tails, a single report, loud as a volley, scatters the unsparing slugs about their doups, and the still clear water, in sudden disturbance, is afloat with scattered feathers, and stained with blood.

Now is the time for the snow-white, here and there ebon-spotted Fro—who with burning eyes has lain couched like a spaniel, his quick breath ever and anon trembling on a passionate whine, to bounce up, as if discharged by a catapulta, and first with immense and enormous high-and-far leaps, and then, fleet as any greyhound, with a breast-brushing brattle down the brae, to dash, all fours, like a flying squirrel fearlessly from his

tree, many yards into the bay with one splashing and momentarily disappearing spang, and then, head and shoulders and broad line of back and rudder tail, all elevated above or level with the wavy water line, to mouth first that murdered mawsey of a mallard, lying as still as if she had been dead for years, with her round, fat, brown bosom towards heaven—then that old Drake, in a somewhat similar posture, but in more gorgeous apparel, his belly being of a pale grey, and his back delicately pencilled and crossed with numberless waved dusky lines—precious prize to one skilled like us in the angling art—next—nobly done, glorious Fro—that cream colour crowned widgeon, with bright rufus chestnut breast, separated from the neck by loveliest waved ash-brown and white lines, while our mind's eye feasteth on the indescribable and changeable green beauty-spot of his wings—and now, if we mistake not, a Golden Eye, best described by his name—finally, that exquisite little duck the Teal; yes, poetical in its delicately pencilled spots as an Indian shell, and when kept to an hour, roasted to a minute, gravied in its own wild richness, with some few other means and appliances to boot, carved finely—most finely—by razor-like knife, in a hand skilful to dissect and cunning to divide—tasted by a tongue and palate both healthily pure as the dewy petal of a morning rose—swallowed by a gullet felt gradually to be extending itself in its intense delight—and received into a stomach yawning with greed and gratitude,—Oh! surely the thrice-blessed of all web-footed birds; the apex of Apician luxury; and able, were any thing on the face

of this feeble earth able, to detain a soul, on the very brink of fate, a short quarter of an hour from an inferior Elysium!

How nobly, like a craken or sea-serpent, Fro reareth his massy head above the foam, his gathered prey seized —all four—by their limber necks, and brightening, like a bunch of flowers, as they glitter towards the shore! With one bold body-shake, felt to the point of each particular hair, he scatters the water from his coat like mist, reminding one of that glorious line in Shakspeare,

> 'Like dewdrops from the Lion's mane,"

advancing with sinewy legs seemingly lengthened by the drenching flood, and dripping tail stretched out in all its broad longitude, with hair almost like white hanging plumes—magnificent as tail of the Desert-Born at the head of his seraglio in the Arabian Sands. Halfway his master meets his beloved Fro on the slope; and first proudly and haughtily pausing to mark our eye, and then humbly, as beseemeth one whom nature, in his boldest and brightest bearing, hath yet made a slave—he lays the offering at our feet, and having felt on his capacious forehead the approving pressure of our hand,

> "While, like the murmur of a dream,
> He hears us breathe his name,"

he suddenly flings himself round with a wheel of transport, and in many a widening circle pursues his own uncontrollable ecstasies with whirlwind speed; till, as if utterly joy-exhausted, he brings his snow-white bulk into

dignified repose on a knoll, that very moment illuminated by a burst of sunshine!

Not now—as fades upon our pen the solemn light of the dying day—shall we dare to decide, whether or not Nature—O most matchless creature of thy kind!—gave thee, or gave thee not, the gift of an immortal soul!—Better such creed—fond and foolish though it may be—yet scarcely unscriptural, for in each word of scripture there are many meanings, even when each sacred syllable is darkest to be read,—better such creed than that of the atheist or sceptic, distracted ever in his seemingly sullen apathy, by the dim, dark doom of dust. Better that Fro should live, than that Newton should die—for ever. What though the benevolent Howard devoted his days to visit the dungeon's gloom, and by intercession with princes, to set the prisoners free from the low damp-dripping stone roof of the deep-dug cell beneath the foundation rocks of the citadel, to the high dewdropping vault of heaven, too, too dazzlingly illumined by the lamp of the insufferable sun! There reason triumphed—those were the works of glorified humanity. But thou—a creature of mere instinct—according to Descartes, a machine, an automaton—hadst yet a constant light of thought and of affection in thine eyes—nor wert thou without some glimmering and mysterious notions—and what more have we ourselves?—of life and of death! Why fear to say that thou wert divinely commissioned and inspired—on that most dismal and shrieking hour, when little Harry Seymour, that bright English boy, "whom all that looked on loved," entangled among the

cruel chains of those fair water-lilies, all so innocently yet so murderously floating round him, was, by all standing or running about there with clenched hands, or kneeling on the sod—given up to inextricable death? We were not present to save the dear boy, who had been delivered to our care as to that of an elder brother, by the noble lady who, in her deep widow's weeds, kissed her sole darling's sunny head, and disappeared. We were not present—or by all that is holiest in heaven or on earth—our arms had been soon around thy neck, when thou wert seemingly about to perish!

But a poor dumb despised dog—nothing, as some say, but animated dust—was there—and without shout or signal—for all the Christian creatures were alike helpless in their despair—shot swift as a sunbeam over the deep, and by those golden tresses, sinking and brightening through the wave, brought the noble child ashore, and stood over him, as if in joy and sorrow, lying too like death on the sand! And when little Harry opened his glazed eyes, and looked bewildered on all the faces around—and then fainted, and revived and fainted again—till at last he came to dim recollection of this world on the bosom of the physician brought thither with incomprehensible speed from his dwelling afar off—thou didst lick his cold white hands and blue face, with a whine that struck awful pity into all hearts, and thou didst follow him—one of the group—as he was borne along—and frisking and gambolling no more all that day, gently didst thou lay thyself down at the feet of his little bed, and watch there unsleeping all night

long! For the boy knew that God had employed one of his lowly creatures to save him—and beseeched that he might lie there to be looked at by the light of the taper, till he himself, as the pains went away, might fall asleep! And we, the watchers by his bed-side, heard him in his dreams mentioning the creature's name in his prayers.

Yet at times—O Fro—thou wert a sad dog indeed—neither to bind nor to hold—for thy blood was soon set a-boil, and thou—like Julius Cæsar—and Demetrius Poliorcetes—and Alexander the Great—and many other ancient and modern kings and heroes—thou wert the slave of thy passions. No Scipio wert thou with a Spanish captive. Often—in spite of threatening eye and uplifted thong—uplifted only, for thou went'st unflogged to thy grave—didst thou disappear for days at a time—as if lost or dead. Rumours of thee were brought to the kirk by shepherds from the remotest hills in the parish—most confused and contradictory—but, when collected and compared, all agreeing in this—that thou wert living, and life-like, and life-imparting, and after a season from thy travels to return; and return thou still didst—wearied often and woe-begone—purpled thy snow-white curling—and thy broad breast torn, not disfigured, by honourable wounds. For never yet saw we a fighter like thee. Up on thy hind legs in a moment, like a growling Polar monster, with thy fore-paws round thy foeman's neck, bull-dog, colley, mastiff, or greyhound, and down with him in a moment, with as much ease as Cass, in the wrestling ring at Carlisle, would throw a Bagman, and

then woe to the throat of the downfallen, for thy jaws were shark-like as they opened and shut with their terrific tusks, grinding through skin and sinew to the spine.

Once, and once only—bullied out of all endurance by a half-drunken carrier—did we consent to let thee engage in a pitched battle with a mastiff victorious in fifty fights—a famous shanker—and a throttler beyond all compare. It was indeed a bloody business—now growling along the glawr of the road—a hairy hurricane—now snorting in the suffocating ditch—now fair play on the clean and clear crown of the causey—now rolling over and over through a chance-open white little gate, into a cottage-garden—now separated by choking them both with a cord—now brought out again with savage and fiery eyes to the scratch on a green plat round the sign-board-swinging tree in the middle of the village—auld women in their mutches crying out, "Shame! whare's the minister?"—young women, with combs in their pretty heads, blinking with pale and almost weeping faces from low-lintelled doors—children crowding for sight and safety on the louping-on-stane—and loud cries ever and anon at each turn and eddy of the fight, of "Well done, Fro, well done, Fro—see how he worries his windpipe —well done, Fro!" for Fro was the delight and glory of the whole parish, and the honour of all its inhabitants, male and female, was felt to be staked on the issue—while at intervals was heard the harsh hoarse voice of the carrier and his compeers, cursing and swearing in triumph in a many-oathed language peculiar to the race that drive the broad-wheeled waggons with the high canvass

roofs, as the might of Teeger prevailed, and the indomitable Fro seemed to be on his last legs beneath a grip of the jugular, and then stretched motionless and passive—in defeat or death. A mere *ruse* to recover wind. Like unshorn Sampson starting from his sleep, and snapping like fired flax the vain bands of the Philistines, Fro whawmled Teeger off, and twisting round his head in spite of the grip on the jugular, the skin stretching and giving way in a ghastly but unfelt wound, he suddenly seized with all his tusks his antagonist's eye, and bit it clean out of the socket. A yowl of unendurable pain—spouting of blood—sickness—swooning—tumbling over—and death. His last fight is over! His remaining eye glazed—his protruded tongue bitten in anguish by his own grinding teeth—his massy hind legs stretched out with a kick like a horse—his short tail stiffens—he is laid out a grim corpse—flung into a cart tied behind the waggon—and off to the tan-yard.

No shouts of victory—but stern, sullen, half-ashamed silence—as of guilty things after the perpetration of a misdeed. Still glaring savagely, ere yet the wrath of fight has subsided in his heart, and going and returning to the bloody place, uncertain whether or not his enemy were about to return, Fro finally lies down at some distance, and with bloody flews keeps licking his bloody legs, and with long darting tongue cleansing the mire from his neck, breast, side, and back—a sanguinary spectacle! He seems almost insensible to our caresses, and there is something almost like upbraiding in his victorious eyes. Now that his veins are cooling, he begins

to feel the pain of his wounds—many on, and close to vital parts. Most agonizing of all—all his four shanks are tusk-pierced, and, in less than ten minutes, he limps away to his kennel, lame as if riddled by shot—

> "Heu quantum mutatus ab illo
> Hectore!"

gore-besmeared and dirt-draggled—an hour ago serenely bright as the lily in June, or the April snow. The huge waggon moves away out of the clachan without its master, who, ferocious from the death of the other brute he loved, dares the whole school to combat. Off fly a dozen jackets—and a devil's dozen of striplings from twelve past to going sixteen—firmly wedged together like the Macedonian Phalanx—are yelling for the fray. There is such another shrieking of women as at the taking of Troy. But

> "The Prince of Mearns stept forth before the crowd,
> And, Carter, challenged you to single fight!"

Bob Howie, who never yet feared the face of clay, and had too great a heart to suffer mere children to combat the strongest and most unhappy man in the whole country—stripped to the buff; and there he stands, with

> "An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;"

shoulders like Atlas—breast like Hercules—and arms like Vulcan. The heart of Benjamin the waggoner dies within him—he accepts the challenge for a future day—and retreating backwards to his clothes, receives a right-hander as from a sledge-hammer on the temple, that fells

him like an ox. The other carters all close in, but are sent spinning in all directions as from the sails of a windmill. Ever as each successive lout seeks the earth, we savage schoolboys rush in upon him in twos, and threes, and fours, basting and battering him as he bawls; at this very crisis—so fate ordained—are seen hurrying down the hill from the south, leaving their wives, sweethearts, and asses in the rear, with coal-black hair and sparkling eyes, brown brawny legs, and clenched iron fists at the end of long arms, swinging flail-like at all times, and never more than now, ready for the fray, a gang of Gipsies! while—beautiful coincidence!—up the hill from the north come on, at double-quick time, an awkward squad of as grim Milesians as ever buried a pike in a Protestant. Nor question nor reply; but in a moment a general mêlée. Men at work in the hay-fields, who would not leave their work for a dog-fight, fling down scythe and rake, and over the hedges into the high-road, a stalwart reinforcement. Weavers leap from their treddles—doff their blue aprons, and out into the air. The red-cowled tailor pops his head through a skylight, and next moment is in the street. The butcher strips his long light-blue linen coat, to engage a Paddy; and the smith, ready for action—for the huge arms of Burniwind are always bare—with a hand-ower-hip delivery, makes the head of the king of the gipsies ring like an anvil. There has been no marshalling of forces—yet lo! as if formed in two regular lines by the Adjutant himself after the first tuilzie, stand the carters, the gipsies, and the Irishmen, opposed to Bob Howie, the butcher,

the smith, the tailor, the weaver, the haymakers, and the boys from the manse—the latter drawn up cautiously, but not cowardly, in the rear. What a twinkling of fists and shillelas! what bashed and bloody noses! cut blubber lips—cheekbones out of all proportion to the rest of the face, and, through sudden black and blue tumefactions, men's changed into pigs' eyes! And now there is also rugging of caps and mutches and hair, "femineo ululatu," for the Egyptian Amazons bear down like furies on the glee'd widow that keeps the change-house, half-witted Shoosy that sells yellow sand, and Davie Donald's dun daughter, commonly called Spunkie. What shrieking and tossing of arms, round the whole length and breadth of the village! Where is Simon Andrew the constable? Where is auld Robert Maxwell the ruling elder? What can have become of Laird Warnock, whose word is law? And what can the Minister be about, can any body tell, that he does not come flying from the manse to save the lives of his parishioners from cannibals, and gipsies, and Eerish, murdering their way to the gallows?

How—why—or when—that bloody battle ceased to be, was never distinctly known either then or since; but, like every thing else, it had an end—and even now we have a confused dream of the spot at its termination—naked men lying on their backs in the mire, all drenched in blood—with women, some old and ugly, with shrivelled witch-like hag breasts, others young, and darkly, swarthily, blackly beautiful, with budding or new-blown bosoms unkerchiefed in the colley-shangy—perilous to see—

leaning over them: and these were the Egyptians! Men in brown shirts, gore-spotted, with green bandages round their broken heads, laughing, and joking, and jeering, and singing, and shouting, though desperately mauled and mangled—while Scottish wives, and widows, and maids, could not help crying out in sympathy, "Oh! but they're bonnie men—what a pity they should aye be sae fond o' fechting, and a' manner o' mischief!"—and these were the Irishmen! Retired and apart, hangs the weaver, with his head over a wall, dog-sick, and bocking in strong convulsions; some haymakers are washing their cut faces in the well; the butcher, bloody as a bit of his own beef, walks silent into the shambles; the smith, whose grimy face hides its pummelling, goes off grinning a ghastly smile in the hands of his scolding, yet not unloving wife; the tailor, gay as a flea, and hot as his own goose, to show how much more he has given than received, offers to leap any man on the ground, hop-step-and-jump, for a mutchkin—while Bob Howie walks about, without a visible wound, except the mark of bloody knuckles on his brawny breast, with arms a-kimbo, seaman-fashion—for Bob had been at sea—and as soon as the whisky comes, hands it about at his own expense, caulker after caulker, to the vanquished—for Bob was as generous as brave; had no spite at the gipsies; and as for Irishmen, why they were ranting, roving, red-hot, dare-devil boys, just like himself; and after the fight, he would have gone with them to Purgatory, or a few steps further down the hill. All the battle through, we manse-boys had fought, it may be said, behind the sha-

dow of him our hero; and in warding off mischief from us, he received not a few heavy body-blows from King Carew, a descendant of Bamfylde Moore, and some crown-cracks from the shillelas of the Connaught Rangers.

Down comes a sudden thunder-plump, making the road a river—and to the whiff o' lightning, all in the shape of man, woman, and child, are under roof-cover. The afternoon soon clears up, and the haymakers leave the clanking empty gill or half-mutchkin stoup, for the field, to see what the rain has done—the forge begins again to roar—the sound of the flying shuttle tells that the weaver is again on his treddles; the tailor hoists up his little window in the thatch, in that close confinement, to enjoy the caller air—the tinklers go to encamp on the common—"the air is balm"—insects, dropping from eave and tree, "show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold"—though the season of bird-singing be over and gone, there is a pleasant chirping hereabouts, thereabouts, every where; the old blind beggar, dog-led, goes from door to door, unconscious that such a stramash has ever been—and dancing round our champion, away we schoolboys all fly with him to swim in the Brother Loch, taking our fishing-rods with us, for one clap of thunder will not frighten the trouts; and about the middle or end of July, we have known great labbers, twenty inches long, play wallop between our very feet, in the warm shallow water, within a yard of the edge, to the yellow-bodied, tinsey-tailed, black half-heckle, with brown mallard wing, a mere midge, but once fixed in lip or tongue, "inextricable as the gored lion's bite."

But ever after that Passage in the life of Fro, his were, on the whole, years of peace. Every season seemed to strengthen his sagacity, and to unfold his wonderful instincts. Most assuredly he knew all the simpler parts of speech—all the household words in the Scottish language. He was, in all our pastimes, as much one of ourselves, as if, instead of being a Pagan with four feet, he had been a Christian with two. As for temper, we trace the sweetness of our own to his; an angry word from one he loved, he forgot in half a minute, offering his lion-like paw; yet there were particular people he could not abide, nor from their hands would he have accepted a roasted potatoe out of the dripping pan, and in this he resembled his master. He knew the Sabbath-day as well as the sexton—and never was known to bark till the Monday morning when the cock crew; and then he would give a long musical yowl, as if his breast were relieved from silence. If ever, in this cold, changeful, inconstant world, there was a friendship that might be called sincere, it was that which, half a century ago and upwards, subsisted between Christopher North and John Fro. We never had a quarrel in all our lives—and within these two months we made a pilgrimage to his grave. He was buried—not by our hands, but by the hands of one whose tender and manly heart loved the old, blind, deaf, staggering creature to the very last—for such in his fourteenth year he truly was—a sad and sorry sight to see, to them who remembered the glory of his stately and majestic years. One day he crawled with a moan-like whine to our bro-

ther's feet, and expired. Reader, young, bright, and beautiful though thou be—remember all flesh is dust!

This is an episode—a tale, in itself complete, yet growing out of, and appertaining to, the main plot of Epic or Article. You will recollect we were speaking of ducks, teals, and widgeons—and we come now to the next clause of the verse—wild geese and swans.

Some people's geese are all swans; but so far from that being the case with ours—sad and sorry are we to say it—now all our swans are geese. But in our buoyant boyhood, all God's creatures were to our eyes just as God made them; and there was ever—especially birds—a tinge of beauty over them all. What an inconceivable difference—distance—to the imagination, between the nature of a tame and a wild goose! Aloft in heaven, themselves in night invisible, the gabble of a cloud of wild geese is sublime. Whence comes it—whither goes it—for what end, and by what power impelled? Reason sees not into the darkness of instinct—and therefore the awe-struck heart of the night-wandering boy beats to hear the league-long gabble that probably has winged its wedge-like way from the lakes, and marshes, and dreary morasses of Siberia, from Lapland, or Iceland, or the unfrequented and unknown northern regions of America—regions set apart, quoth Bewick we believe, for summer residences and breeding places, and where they are amply provided with a variety of food, a large portion of which must consist of the larvæ of gnats, and myriads of insects, there fostered by the unsetting sun! Now they are gabbling good Gaelic over a High-

land night-moor. Perhaps in another hour the descending cloud will be covering the wide waters at the head of the wild Loch Maree—or, silent and asleep, the whole host be riding at anchor around Lomond's Isles!

But 'tis now mid-day—and lo! in that mediterranean —a flock of wild Swans! Have they dropt down from the ether into the water almost as pure as ether, without having once folded their wings, since they rose aloft to shun the insupportable northern snows hundreds of leagues beyond the storm-swept Orcades? To look at the quiet creatures, you might think that they had never left the circle of that little loch. There they hang on their shadows, even as if asleep in the sunshine; and now stretching out their long wings—how apt for flight from clime to clime!—joyously they beat the liquid radiance, till to the loud flapping high rises the mist, and wide spreads the foam, almost sufficient for a rainbow. Safe are they from all birds of prey. The Osprey dashes down on the teal, or sea-trout, swimming within or below their shadow. The great Erne, or Sea-eagle, pounces on the mallard, as he mounts from the bulrushes before the wild swans sailing, with all wings hoisted, like a fleet—but osprey nor eagle dares to try his talons on that stately bird—for he is bold in his beauty, and formidable as he is fair; the pinions that swim and soar can also smite; and though the one be a lover of war, the other of peace, yet of them it may be said,

"The eagle he is lord above,
The swan is lord below!"

To have shot such a creature—so large—so white—

so high-soaring—and on the winds of midnight wafted from so far—a creature that seemed not merely a stranger in that loch, but belonging to some mysterious land in another hemisphere, whose coast ships with frozen rigging have been known to visit, driving under bare poles through a month's snow storms—to have shot such a creature was an era in our imagination, from which, had nature been more prodigal, we might have sprung up a poet. Once, and but once, we were involved in the glory of that event. The creature had been in a dream of some river or lake in Kamtschatka—or ideally listening,

> "Across the waves' tumultuous roar,
> The wolf's long howl from Oonalashka's shore,"

when, guided by our good genius and our brightest star, we suddenly saw him sitting asleep in all his state, within gunshot, in a bay of the moonlight Loch! We had nearly fainted—died on the very spot—and why were we not entitled to have died as well as any other passionate spirit, whom joy ever divorced from life? We blow his black bill into pieces—not a feather on his head but was touched; and like a little white-sailed pleasure-boat caught in a whirlwind, the wild swan spun round, and then lay motionless on the water, as if all her masts had gone by the board. We were all alone that night—not even Fro was with us; we had reasons for being alone, for we wished not that there should be any foot-fall but our own round that mountain-hut. Could we swim? Ay, like the wild swan himself, through surge or breaker. But now the loch was still as the sky,

and twenty strokes carried us close to the glorious creature, which, grasped by both hands, and supporting us as it was trailed beneath our breast, while we floated rather than swam ashore, we felt to be in verity our—Prey! We trembled with a sort of fear, to behold him lying indeed dead on the sward. The moon—the many stars, here and there one wondrously large and lustrous—the hushed glittering loch—the hills, though somewhat dimmed, green all winter through, with here and there a patch of snow on their summits in the blue sky, on which lay a few fleecy clouds—the mighty foreign bird, whose plumage we had never hoped to touch but in a dream, lying like the ghost of something that ought not to have been destroyed—the scene was altogether such as made our wild young heart quake, and almost repent of having killed a creature so surpassingly beautiful. But that was a fleeting fancy—and over the wide moors we went, like an American Indian laden with game, journeying to his wigwam over the wilderness. As we whitened towards the village in the light of morning, the earlier labourers held up their hands in wonder what and who we might be; and Fro, who had missed his master, and was lying awake for him on the mount, came bounding along, nor could refrain the bark of delighted passion as his nose nuzzled in the soft down of the bosom of the creature whom he remembered to have sometimes seen floating too far off in the lake, or far above our reach cleaving the firmament.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS SPORTING JACKET.

FYTTE THIRD.

O MUCKLE-MOU'D Meg! and can it be that thou art numbered among forgotten things—unexistences!

> "Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
> With rocks, and stones, and trees!"

What would we not now give for a sight—a kiss—of thy dear lips! Lips which we remember once to have put to our own, even when thy beloved barrel was double-loaded! Now we sigh to think on what then made us shudder! Oh! that thy butt were but now resting on our shoulder! Alas! for ever discharged! Burst and rent asunder, art thou now lying buried in a peat-moss? Did some vulgar villain of a village Vulcan convert thee, name and nature, into nails? Some dark-visaged Douglas of a henroost-robbing Egyptian, solder thee into a pan? Oh! that our passion could dig down unto thee in the

bowels of the earth—and with loud lamenting elegies, and louder hymns of gratulation, restore thee, buttless, lockless, vizyless, burst, rent, torn, and twisted though thou be'st, to the light of day, and of the world-rejoicing Sun! Then would we adorn thee with evergreen wreaths of the laurel and the ivy—and hang thee up, in memory and in monument of all the bright, dim, still, stormy days of our boyhood—when gloom itself was glory —and when—But

> "Be hush'd my dark spirit! for wisdom condemns,
> When the faint and the feeble deplore."

Cassandra—Corinna—Sappho—Lucretia—Cleopatra—Tighe—De Staël—in their beauty or in their genius, are, with millions on millions of the fair-faced or bright-souled, nothing but dust and ashes; and as they are, so shall Baillie, and Grant, and Hemans, and Landon be—and why vainly yearn "with love and longings infinite," to save from doom of perishable nature—of all created things, but one alone—Muckle-mou'd Meg!

After a storm comes a calm; and we hasten to give the sporting world the concluding account of our education. In the moorland parish—God bless it—in which we had the inestimable advantage of passing our boyhood—there were a good many falcons—of course the kite or glead—the buzzard—the sparrowhawk—the marsh harrier—that imp the merlin—and, rare bird and beautiful! there, on a cliff which, alas! a crutched man must climb no more, did the Peregrine build her nest. You must not wonder at this, for the parish was an extensive one even for Scotland—half Highland half Lowland—and had not

only "muirs and mosses many o," but numerous hills, not a few mountains, some most extraordinary cliffs, considerable store of woods, and one, indeed, that might well be called The Forest.

Lift up thy rock-crowned forehead through thy own sweet stormy skies, Auld Scotland! and as sternly and grimly thou look'st far over the hushed or howling seas, remember thee—till all thy moors and mosses quake at thy heart, as if swallowing up an invading army—a fate that oft befell thy foes of yore—remember thee, in mist-shrouded dream, and cloud-born vision, of the long line of kings, and heroes, and sages, and bards, whose hallowed bones sleep in pine-darkened tombs among the mountain heather, by the side of rivers, and lochs, and arms of ocean—their spirits yet seen in lofty superstition, sailing or sitting on the swift or settled tempest. Lift up thy rock-crowned forehead, Auld Scotland! and sing aloud to all the nations of the earth, with thy voice of cliffs, and caves, and caverns,

"Wha daur meddle wi' me?"

What! some small, puny, piteous windpipes are heard cheeping against thee from the Cockneys—like ragged chickens agape in the pip. How the feeble and fearful creatures would crawl on their hands and knees, faint and giddy, and shrieking out for help to the heather stalks, if forced to face one of thy cliffs, and foot its flinty bosom! How would the depths of their long ears, cotton-stuffed in vain, ache to the spray-thunder of thy cataracts! Sick, sick would be their stomachs, storm-swept

in a six-oared cutter into the jaws of Staffa! That sight is sufficient to set the most saturnine on the guffaw—the Barry Cornwall himself, crossing a chasm a hundred yards deep,

"On the uncertain footing of a spar,"

on a tree felled where it stood, centuries ago, by steel or storm, into a ledgeless bridge, oft sounding and shaking to the hunter's feet in chase of the red-deer! The Cockneys do not like us Scotchmen—because of our high cheekbones. They are sometimes very high indeed, very coarse, and very ugly, and give a Scotchman a grim and gaunt look, assuredly not to be sneezed at, with any hope of impunity, on a dark day and in a lonesome place, by the most heroic chief of the most heroic clan in all the level land of Lud, travelling all by himself in a horse and gig, and with a black boy in a cockaded glazed hat, through the Heelands o' Scotland, passing of course, at the very least, for a captain of Hussars! Then Scotchmen canna keep their backs straught, it seems, and are always booin' and booin' afore a great man. Cannot they, indeed? Do they, indeed? Ascend with that Scottish shepherd yon mountain's breast—swim with him that mountain loch—a bottle of Glenlivet, who first stands in shallow water, on the Oak Isle—and whose back will be straughtest, that of the Caledonian or the Cockney? The little Luddite will be puking among the heather, about some five hundred feet above the level of the sea—higher for the first time in his life than St Paul's, and nearer than he ever will again be, either in

the spirit or the flesh, to heaven. The little Luddite will be puking in the hitherto unpolluted loch, after some seven strokes or so, with a strong Scottish weed twisted like an eel round its thigh, and shrieking out for the nearest resuscitating machine in a country, where, alas! there is no Humane Society. The back of the shepherd—even in presence of that "great man"—will be as straught as—do not tremble, Cockney—this Crutch. Conspicuous from afar like a cairn, from the inn-door at Arrochar, in an hour he will be turning up his little finger so—on the Cobler's head; or, in twenty minutes, gliding like a swan, or shooting like a salmon, his back being still straught—leaving Luss, he will be shaking the dewdrops from his brawny body on the silver sand of Inch Morren.

And happy were we, Christopher North, happy were we in the parish in which Fate delivered us up to Nature, that, under her tuition, our destinies might be fulfilled. A parish! Why it was in itself a kingdom—a world. Thirty miles long by twenty at the broadest, and five at the narrowest; and is not that a kingdom—is not that a world worthy of any monarch that ever wore a crown? Was it level? Yes, league-long levels were in it of greensward, hard as the sand of the sea-shore, yet springy and elastic, fit training ground for Childers, or Eclipse, or Hambletonian, or Smolensko, or for a charge of cavalry in some great pitched battle, while artillery might keep playing against artillery from innumerous affronting hills. Was it boggy? Yes,

black bogs were there, which extorted a panegyric from the roving Irishman in his richest brogue—bogs in which forests had of old been buried, and armies with all their banners. Was it hilly? Ay, there the white sheep nibbled, and the back cattle grazed; there they baa'd and they lowed upon a thousand hills—a crowd of cones, all green as emerald. Was it mountainous? Give answer from afar, ye mist-shrouded summits, and ye clouds cloven by the eagle's wing! But whether ye be indeed mountains, or whether ye be clouds, who can tell, bedazzled as are his eyes by that long-lingering sunset, that drenches heaven and earth in one indistinguishable glory, setting the West on fire, as if the final conflagration were begun! Was it woody? Hush, hush, and you will hear a pine-cone drop in the central silence of a forest—a silent and solitary wilderness—in which you may wander a whole day long, unaccompanied but by the cushat, the corby, the falcon, the roe, and they are all shy of human feet, and, like thoughts, pass away in a moment; so if you long for less fleeting farewells from the native dwellers in the wood, lo! the bright brown queen of the butterflies, gay and gaudy in her glancings through the solitude, the dragon-fly whirring bird-like over the pools in the glade; and if your ear desire music, the robin and the wren may haply trill you a few notes among the briery rocks, or the bold blackbird open wide his yellow bill in his holly-tree, and set the squirrels a-leaping all within reach of his ringing roundelay. Any rivers? one—to whom a thousand torrents are tributary—as he himself is tributary to the sea. Any lochs? How many we know

not—for we never counted them twice alike—omitting perhaps some forgotten tarns, or counting twice over some one of our more darling waters, worthy to dash their waves against the sides of ships—alone wanting to the magnificence of those inland seas! Yes—it was as level, as boggy, as hilly, as mountainous, as woody, as lochy, and as rivery a parish, as ever laughed to scorn Colonel Mudge and his Trigonometrical Survey.

Was not that a noble parish for apprenticeship in sports and pastimes of a great master? No need of any teacher. On the wings of joy we were borne over the bosom of nature, and learnt all things worthy and needful to be learned, by instinct first, and afterwards by reason. To look at a wild creature—winged with feathers, or mere feet—and not desire to destroy or capture it—is impossible to passion—to imagination—to fancy. Thus had we longed to feel and handle the glossy plumage of the beaked birds—the wide-winged Birds of Prey—before our finger had ever touched a trigger. Their various flight, in various weather, we had watched and noted with something even of the eye of a naturalist—the wonder of a poet; for among the brood of boys there are hundreds and thousands of poets who never see manhood, —the poetry dying away—the boy growing up into mere prose;—yet to some even of the paragraphs of these Three Fyttes do we appeal, that a few sparks of the sacred light are yet alive within us; and sad to our old ears would be the sound of "Put out the light, and then—put out the light!" Thus were we impelled, even when a mere child, far away from the manse, for miles, into the moors

and woods. Once it was feared that poor wee Kit was lost; for having set off all by himself, at sunrise, to draw a night-line from the distant Black Loch, and look at a trap set for a glead, a mist overtook him on the moor on his homeward way, with an eel as long as himself hanging over his shoulder, and held him prisoner for many hours within its shifting walls, frail indeed, and opposing no resistance to the hand, yet impenetrable to the feet of fear as the stone dungeon's thraldom. If the mist had remained, that would have been nothing; only a still cold wet seat on a stone; but as "a trot becomes a gallop soon, in spite of curb and rein," so a Scotch mist becomes a shower—and a shower a flood—and a flood a storm—and a storm a tempest—and a tempest thunder and lightning—and thunder and lightning heaven-quake and earthquake—till the heart of poor wee Kit quaked, and almost died within him in the desert. In this age of Confessions, need we be ashamed to own, in the face of the whole world, that we sat us down and cried! The small brown Moorland bird, as dry as a toast, hopped out of his heather-hole, and cheerfully cheeped comfort. With crest just a thought lowered by the rain, the green-backed, white-breasted peaseweep, walked close by us in the mist; and sight of wonder, that made even in that quandary by the quagmire our heart beat with joy—lo! never seen before, and seldom since, three wee peaseweeps, not three days old, little bigger than shrew-mice, all covered with blackish down, interspersed with long white hair, running after their mother! But the large hazel eye of the she peaseweep, restless even in the most utter soli-

tude, soon spied us glowering at her, and her young ones, through our tears; and not for a moment doubting—Heaven forgive her for the shrewd but cruel suspicion!—that we were Lord Eglinton's gamekeeper—with a sudden shrill cry that thrilled to the marrow in our cold backbone—flapped and fluttered herself away into the mist, while the little black bits of down disappeared, like devils, into the moss. The croaking of the frogs grew terrible. And worse and worse, close at hand, seeking his lost cows through the mist, the bellow of the notorious red bull! We began saying our prayers; and just then the sun forced himself out into the open day, and, like the sudden opening of the shutters of a room, the whole world was filled with light. The frogs seemed to sink among the pow-heads—as for the red bull who had tossed the tinker, he was cantering away, with his tail towards us, to a lot of cows on the hill; and hark—a long, a loud, an oft-repeated halloo! Rab Roger, honest fellow, and Leezy Muir, honest lass, from the manse, in search of our dead body! Rab pulls our ears lightly, and Leezy kisses us from the one to the other—wrings the rain out of our long yellow hair—(a pretty contrast to the small grey sprig now on the crown of our pericranium, and the thin tail acock behind)—and by and by stepping into Hazel-Deanhead for a drap and a "chitterin' piece," by the time we reach the manse we are as dry as a whistle—take our scold and our pawmies from the minister—and, by way of punishment and penance, after a little hot whisky toddy, with brown sugar and a bit of bun, are bundled off to bed in the daytime!

Thus we grew up a Fowler, ere a loaded gun was in our hand—and often guided the city-fowler to the haunts of the curlew, the plover, the moorfowl, and the falcon. The falcon! yes—in the higher region of clouds and cliffs. For now we had shot up into a stripling—and how fast had we so shot up you may know, by taking notice of the schoolboy on the play-green, and two years afterwards discovering, perhaps, that he is that fine tall ensign carrying the colours among the light-bobs of the regiment, to the sound of clarion and flute, cymbal and great drum, marching into the city a thousand strong.

We used in early boyhood, deceived by some uncertainty in size, not to distinguish between a kite and a buzzard, which was very stupid, and unlike us—more like Poietes in Salmonia. The flight of the buzzard, as may be seen in Selby, is slow—and except during the season of incubation, when it often soars to a considerable height, it seldom remains long on the wing. It is indeed a heavy, inactive bird, both in disposition and appearance, and is generally seen perched upon some old and decayed tree, such being its favourite haunt. Him we soon thought little or nothing about—and the last one we shot, it was, we remember, just as he was coming out of the deserted nest of a crow, which he had taken possession of out of pure laziness; and we killed him for not building a house of his own in a country where there was no want of sticks. But the kite or glead, as the same distinguished ornithologist rightly says, is proverbial for the ease and gracefulness of its

flight, which generally consists of large and sweeping circles, performed with a motionless wing, or at least with a slight and almost imperceptible stroke of its pinions, and at very distant intervals. In this manner, and directing its course by its tail, which acts as a rudder, whose slightest motion produces effect, it frequently soars to such a height as to become almost invisible to the human eye. Him we loved to slay, as a bird worthy of our barrel. Him and her have we watched for days, like a lynx, till we were led, almost as if by an instinct, to their nest in the heart of the forest—a nest lined with wool, hair, and other soft materials, in the fork of some large tree. They will not, of course, utterly forsake their nest, when they have young, fire at them as you will, though they become more wary, and seem as if they heard a leaf fall, so suddenly will they start and soar to heaven. We remember, from an ambuscade in a briery dell in the forest, shooting one flying overhead to its nest; and, on going up to him as he lay on his back, with clenched talons and fierce eyes, absolutely shrieking and yelling with fear, and rage, and pain, we intended to spare his life, and only take him prisoner, when we beheld beside him on the sod, a chicken from the brood of famous ginger piles, then, all but his small self, following the feet of their clucking mother at the manse! With visage all inflamed, we gave him the butt on his double organ of destructiveness, then only known to us by the popular name of "back o' the head," exclaiming

"Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat"——

Quivered every feather, from beak to tail and talon, in his last convulsion,

" Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras ! "

In the season of love what combats have we been witness to—Umpire—between birds of prey ! The Female Falcon, she sat aloof life a sultana, in her soft, sleek, glossy plumes, the iris in her eye of wilder, more piercing, fiery, cruel, fascinating, and maddening lustre, than ever lit the face of the haughtiest human queen, adored by princes on her throne of diamonds. And now her whole plumage shivers—and is ruffled—for her own Gentle Peregrine appears, and they two will enjoy their dalliance on the edge of the cliff-chasm —and the Bride shall become a wife in that stormy sunshine on the loftiest precipice of all these our Alps. But a sudden sugh sweeps down from heaven, and a rival Hawk comes rushing in his rage from his widowed eyry, and will win and wear this his second selected bride—for her sake, tearing, or to be torn, to pieces. Both struck down from heaven, fall a hundred fathom to the heather, talon-locked, in the mutual gripe of death. Fair play, gentlemen, and attend to the Umpire. It is, we understand, to be an up-and-down fight. Allow us to disentagle you—and without giving advantage to either—elbow-room to both. Neither of you ever saw a human face so near before—nor ever were captive in a human hand. Both fasten their momentarily frightened eyes on us, and, holding back their heads, emit a wild ringing cry. But now they catch sight of each other,

and in an instant are one bunch of torn, bloody plumes. Perhaps their wings are broken, and they can soar no more—so up we fling them both into the air—and wheeling each within a short circle, clash again go both birds together, and the talons keep tearing throats till they die. Let them die, then, for both are for ever disabled to enjoy their lady-love. She, like some peerless flower in the days of chivalry at a fatal tournament, seeing her rival lovers dying for her sake, nor ever to wear her glove or scarf in the front of battle, rising to leave her canopy in tears of grief and pride—even like such Angelica, the Falcon unfolds her wings, and flies slowly away from her dying ravishers, to bewail her virginity on the mountains. "O, Frailty! thy name is woman!" A third Lover is already on the wing, more fortunate than his preceding peers—and Angelica is won, woo'd, and sitting, about to lay an egg in an old eyry, soon repaired and furbished up for the honey-week, with a number of small birds lying on the edge of the hymeneal couch, with which, when wearied with love, and yawp with hunger, Angelica may cram her maw till she be ready to burst, by her bridegroom's breast.

Forgotten all human dwellings, and all the thoughts and feelings that abide by firesides, and doorways, and rooms, and roofs—delightful was it, during the long long midsummer holyday, to lie all alone, on the greensward of some moor-surrounded mount, not far from the foot of some range of cliffs, and with our face up to the sky, wait, unwearying, till a speck was seen to cross the blue cloudless lift, and steadying itself after a minute's

quivering into motionless rest, as if hung suspended there by the counteracting attraction of heaven and earth, known to be a Falcon! Balanced far above its prey, and, soon as the right moment came, ready to pounce down, and fly away with the treasure in its talons to its crying eyry! If no such speck were for hours visible in the ether, doubtless dream upon dream, rising unbidden, and all of their own wild accord, congenial with the wilderness, did, like phantasmagoria, pass to and fro, backwards and forwards, along the darkened curtain of our imagination, all the lights of reason being extinguished or removed! In that trance, not unheard, although scarcely noticed, was the cry of the curlew, the murmur of the little moorland burn, or the din, almost like dashing, of the far-off loch. 'Twas thus that the senses, in their most languid state, ministered to the fancy, and fed her for a future day, when all the imagery then received so imperfectly, and in broken fragments, into her mysterious keeping, was to arise in orderly array, and to form a world more lovely and more romantic even than the reality, which then lay hushed or whispering, glittering or gloomy, in the outward air. For the senses hear and see all things in their seeming slumbers, from all the impulses that come to them in solitude gaining more, far more, than they have lost! When we are awake, or half awake, or almost sunk into a sleep, they are ceaselessly gathering materials for the thinking and feeling soul—and it is hers, in a deep delight formed of memory and imagination, to put them together by a divine plastic power, in which she is almost, as it were, a very creator,

till she exult to look on beauty and on grandeur such as this earth and these heavens never saw, products of her own immortal and immaterial energies, and BEING once, to BE for ever, when the universe, with all its suns and systems, is no more!

But oftener we and our shadows glided along the gloom at the foot of the cliffs, ear-led by the incessant cry of the young hawks in their nest, ever hungry except when asleep. Left to themselves, when the old birds are hunting, an hour's want of food is felt to be famine, and you hear the cry of the callow creatures, angry with one another, and it may be, fighting with soft beak and pointless claws, till a living lump of down tumbles over the rock-ledge, soon to be picked to the bone by insects, who likewise all live upon prey; for example, Ants of carrion. Get you behind that briery bield, that wild-rose hanging rock, far and wide scenting the wilderness with a faint perfume; or into that cell, almost a parlour, with a Gothic roof formed by large stones leaning one against the other and so arrested, as they tumbled from the frost-riven breast of the precipice. Wait there, though it should be for hours—but it will not be for hours; for both the old hawks are circling the sky, one over the marsh and one over the wood. She comes—she comes —the female Sparrowhawk, twice the size of her mate; and while he is plain in his dress, as a cunning and cruel Quaker, she is gay and gaudy as a Demirep dressed for the pit of the Opera—deep and broad her bosom, with an air of luxury in her eyes that glitter like a serpent's. But now she is a mother, and plays a mother's part—

greedier, even than for herself, for her greedy young. The lightning flashes from the cave-mouth, and she comes tumbling, and dashing, and rattling through the dwarf bushes on the cliff-face, perpendicular and plumb-down, within three yards of her murderer. Her husband will not visit his nest this day—no—nor all night long; for a father's is not as a mother's love. Your only chance of killing him, too, is to take a lynx-eyed circuit round about all the moors within half a league; and possibly you may see him sitting on some cairn, or stone, or tree-stump, afraid to fly either hither or thither, perplexed by the sudden death he saw appearing among the unaccountable smoke, scenting it yet with his fine nostrils, so as to be unwary of your approach. Hazard a long shot—for you are right behind him—and a slug may hit him on the head, and, following the feathers, split his skull-cap and scatter his brains. 'Tis done—and the eyry is orphan'd. Let the small brown moorland birds twitter Io Pean, as they hang balanced on the bulrushes—let the stone-chat glance less fearfully within shelter of the old grey cairn—let the cushat coo his joyous gratitude in the wood—and the lark soar up to heaven, afraid no more of a demon descending from the cloud. As for the imps in the eyry, let them die of rage and hunger—for there must always be pain in the world; and 'tis well when its endurance by the savage is the cause of pleasure to the sweet—when the gore-yearning cry of the cruel is drowned in the song of the kind at feed or play—and the tribes of the peace-loving

rejoice in the despair and death of the robbers and shedders of blood!

Not one fowler of fifty thousand has in all his days shot an Eagle. That royal race seems nearly extinct in Scotland. Gaze as you will over the wide circumference of a Highland heaven, calm as the bride's dream of love, or disturbed as the shipwrecked sailor's vision of a storm, and all spring and summer long you may not chance to see the shadow of an Eagle in the sun. The old kings of the air are sometimes yet seen by the shepherds on cliff or beneath cloud; but their offspring are rarely allowed to get full-fledged in spite of the rifle always lying loaded in the shieling. But in the days of our boyhood there were many glorious things on earth and air that now no more seem to exist, and among these were the Eagles. One pair had from time immemorial built on the Echo-cliff, and you could see with a telescope the eyry, with the rim of its circumference, six feet in diameter, strewn with partridges, moorfowl, and leverets —their feathers and their skeletons. But the Echo-cliff was inaccessible.

> "Hither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
> And mists that spread the flying shroud,
> And sunbeams, and the flying blast,
> That if it could, would hurry past,
> But that enormous barrier binds it fast.'

No human eye ever saw the birds within a thousand feet of the lower earth; yet how often must they have stooped down on lamb and leveret, and struck the cushat in her very yew-tree in the centre of the wood! Perhaps

they preyed at midnight, by the light of the waning moon —at mid-day, in the night of sun-hiding tempests—or afar off, in even more solitary wilds, carried thither on the whirlwind of their own wings, they swept off their prey from uninhabited isles,

"Placed far amid the melancholy main,"

or vast inland glens, where not a summer shieling smiles beneath the region of eternal snows. But eagles are subject to diseases in flesh, and bone, and blood, just like the veriest poultry that die of croup and consumption on the dunghill before the byre-door. Sickness blinds the eye that God framed to pierce the seas, and weakens the wing that dallies with the tempest. Then the eagle feels how vain is the doctrine of the divine right of kings. He is hawked at by the mousing owl, whose instinct instructs him that these talons have lost their grasp, and these pinions their death-blow. The eagle lies for weeks famished in his eyry, and hunger-driven over the ledge, leaves it to ascend no more. He is dethroned, and wasted to mere bones—a bunch of feathers—his flight is now slower than that of the buzzard—he floats himself along now with difficulty from knoll to knoll, pursued by the shrieking magpies, buffeted by the corby, and lying on his back, like a recreant, before the beak of the raven, who, a month ago, was terrified to hop round the carcass till the king of the air was satiated, and gave his permission to croaking Sooty to dig into the bowels he himself had scorned. Yet he is a noble aim to the fowler still; you break a wing and a leg, but fear to touch him with

your hand; Fro feels the iron-clutch of his talons constricted in the death-pang; and holding him up, you wonder that such an anatomy—for his weight is not more than three pounds—could drive his claws through that shaggy hide till blood sprung to the blow—inextricable but to yells of pain, and leaving gashes hard to heal, for virulent is the poison of rage in a dying bird of prey.

Sublime solitude of our boyhood! where each stone in the desert was sublime, unassociated though it was with dreams of memory, in its own simple native power over the human heart! Each sudden breath of wind passed by us like the voice of a spirit. There were strange meanings in the clouds—often so like human forms and faces threatening us off, or beckoning us on, with long black arms, back into the long-withdrawing wilderness of heaven. We wished then, with quaking bosoms, that we had not been all alone in the desert—that there had been another heart, whose beatings might have kept time with our own, that we might have gathered courage in the silent and sullen gloom from the light in a brother's eye—the smile on a brother's countenance. And often had we such a Friend in these our far-off wanderings over moors and mountains, by the edge of lochs, and through the umbrage of the old pine-woods. A Friend from whom "we had received his heart, and given him back our own,"—such a friendship as the most fortunate and the most happy—and at that time we were both—are sometimes permitted by Providence, with all the passionate devotion of young and untamed imagination, to enjoy, during a bright dreamy world of which

that friendship is as the Polar star. Emilius Godfrey! for ever holy be the name! a boy when we were but a child —when we were but a youth, a man. We felt stronger in the shadow of his arm—happier, bolder, better in the light of his countenance. He was the protector—the guardian of our moral being. In our pastimes we bounded with wilder glee—at our studies we sat with intenser earnestness, by his side. He it was that taught us how to feel all those glorious sunsets, and embued our young spirit with the love and worship of nature. He it was that taught us to feel that our evening prayer was no idle ceremony to be hastily gone through—that we might lay down our head on the pillow, then soon smoothed in sleep, but a command of God, which a response from nature summoned the humble heart to obey. He it was who for ever had at command wit for the sportive, wisdom for the serious hour. Fun and frolic flowed in the merry music of his lips—they lightened from the gay glancing of his eyes—and then, all at once, when the one changed its measures, and the other gathered, as it were, a mist or a cloud, an answering sympathy chained our own tongue, and darkened our own countenance, in intercommunion of spirit felt to be indeed divine! It seemed as if we knew but the words of language—that he was a scholar who saw into their very essence. The books we read together were, every page, and every sentence of every page, all covered over with light. Where his eye fell not as we read, all was dim or dark, unintelligible or with imperfect meanings. Whether we perused with him a volume writ by a nature like our

own, or the volume of the earth and the sky, or the volume revealed from Heaven, next day we always knew and felt that something had been added to our being. Thus imperceptibly we grew up in our intellectual stature, breathing a purer moral and religious air, with all our finer affections towards other human beings, all our kindred and our kind, touched with a dearer domestic tenderness, or with a sweet benevolence that seemed to our ardent fancy to embrace the dwellers in the uttermost regions of the earth. No secret of pleasure or pain—of joy or grief—of fear or hope—had our heart to withhold or conceal from Emilius Godfrey. He saw it as it beat within our bosom, with all its imperfections—may we venture to say, with all its virtues. A repented folly—a confessed fault—a sin for which we were truly contrite—a vice flung from us with loathing and with shame—in such moods as these, happier were we to see his serious and his solemn smile, than when in mirth and merriment we sat by his side in the social hour on a knoll in the open sunshine, and the whole school were in ecstasies to hear tales and stories from his genius, even like a flock of birds chirping in their joy all newly-alighted in a vernal land. In spite of that difference in our years—or oh! say rather because that very difference did touch the one heart with tenderness and the other with reverence, how often did we two wander, like elder and younger brother, in the sunlight and the moonlight solitudes! Woods—into whose inmost recesses we should have quaked alone to penetrate, in his company were glad as gardens, through their most awful umbrage; and

there was beauty in the shadows of the old oaks. Cataracts—in whose lonesome thunder, as it pealed into those pitchy pools, we durst not by ourselves have faced the spray—in his presence, dinn'd with a merry music in the desert, and cheerful was the thin mist they cast sparkling up into the air. Too severe for our uncompanioned spirit, then easily overcome with awe, was the solitude of those remote inland lochs. But as we walked with him along the winding shores, how passing sweet the calm of both blue depths—how magnificent the white-crested waves tumbling beneath the black thunder-cloud! More beautiful, because our eyes gazed on it along with his, at the beginning or the ending of some sudden storm, the Apparition of the Rainbow! Grander in its wildness, that seemed to sweep at once all the swinging and stooping woods, to our ear, because his too listened, the concerto by winds and waves played at midnight, when not one star was in the sky. With him we first followed the Falcon in her flight—he showed us on the Echo-cliff the Eagle's eyry. To the thicket he led us where lay couched the lovely-spotted Doe, or showed us the mild-eyed creature browsing on the glade with her two fawns at her side. But for him we should not then have seen the antlers of the red-deer, for the Forest was indeed a most savage place, and haunted—such was the superstition at which they who scorned it trembled—haunted by the ghost of a huntsman whom a jealous rival had murdered as he stooped, after the chase, at a little mountain well that ever since oozed out blood. What converse passed between us two in all those still shadowy solitudes! Into

what depths of human nature did he teach our wondering eyes to look down! Oh! what was to become of us, we sometimes thought in sadness that all at once made our spirits sink—like a lark falling suddenly to earth, struck by the fear of some unwonted shadow from above—what was to become of us when the mandate should arrive for him to leave the Manse for ever, and sail away in a ship to India never more to return! Ever as that dreaded day drew nearer, more frequent was the haze in our eyes; and in our blindness, we knew not that such tears ought to have been far more rueful still, for that he then lay under orders for a longer and more lamentable voyage—a voyage over a narrow streight to the Eternal shore. All—all at once he drooped; on one fatal morning the dread decay began—with no forewarning, the springs on which his being had so lightly—so proudly—so grandly moved—gave way. Between one sabbath and another his bright eyes darkened—and while all the people were assembled at the sacrament, the soul of Emilius Godfrey soared up to Heaven. It was indeed a dreadful death, serene and sainted though it were—and not a hall—not a house—not a hut—not a shieling within all the circle of those wide mountains, that did not on that night mourn as if it had lost a son. All the vast parish attended his funeral—Lowlanders and Highlanders in their own garb of grief. And have time and tempest now blackened the white marble of that monument—is that inscription now hard to be read—the name of Emilius Godfrey in green obliteration—nor haply one

surviving who ever saw the light of the countenance of him there interred! Forgotten as if he had never been! for few were that glorious orphan's kindred—and they lived in a foreign land—forgotten but by one heart, faithful through all the chances and changes of this restless world! And therein enshrined among all its holiest remembrances, shall be the image of Emilius Godfrey, till it too, like his, shall be but dust and ashes!

Oh! blame not boys for so soon forgetting one another—in absence or in death. Yet forgetting is not just the very word; call it rather a reconcilement to doom and destiny—in thus obeying a benign law of nature that soon streams sunshine over the shadows of the grave. Not otherwise could all the ongoings of this world be continued. The nascent spirit outgrows much in which it once found all delight; and thoughts delightful still, thoughts of the faces and the voices of the dead, perish not, lying sometimes in slumber—sometimes in sleep. It belongs not to the blessed season and genius of youth, to hug to its heart useless and unavailing griefs. Images of the well-beloved, when they themselves are in the mould, come and go, no unfrequent visitants, through the meditative hush of solitude. But our main business—our prime joys and our prime sorrows—ought to be—must be with the living. Duty demands it; and Love, who would pine to death over the bones of the dead, soon fastens upon other objects with eyes and voices to smile and whisper an answer to all his vows. So was it with us. Ere the midsummer sun had withered the flowers that spring had sprinkled over our

Godfrey's grave, youth vindicated its own right to happiness; and we felt that we did wrong to visit too often that corner in the kirkyard. No fears had we of any too oblivious tendencies; in our dreams we saw him—most often all alive as ever—sometimes a phantom away from that grave! If the morning light was frequently hard to be endured, bursting suddenly upon us along with the feeling that he was dead, it more frequently cheered and gladdened us with resignation, and sent us forth a fit playmate to the dawn that rang with all sounds of joy. Again we found ourselves angling down the river, or along the loch—once more following the flight of the Falcon along the woods—eying the Eagle on the Echo-cliff. Days passed by, without so much as one thought of Emilius Godfrey—pursuing our pastime with all our passion, reading our books intently—just as if he had never been! But often and often, too, we thought we saw his figure coming down the hill straight towards us—his very figure—we could not be deceived—but the love-raised ghost disappeared on a sudden—the grief-woven spectre melted into the mist. The strength, that formerly had come from his counsels, now began to grow up of itself within our own unassisted being. The world of nature became more our own, moulded and modified by all our own feelings and fancies; and with a bolder and more original eye we saw the smoke from the sprinkled cottages, and read the faces of the mountaineers on their way to their work, or coming and going to the house of God.

Then this was to be our last year in the parish—now

dear to us as our birth-place; nay, itself our very birth-place—for in it from the darkness of infancy had our soul been born. Once gone and away from the region of cloud and mountain, we felt that most probably never more should we return. For others, who thought they knew us better than we did ourselves, had chalked out a future life for young Christopher North—a life that was sure to lead to honour, and riches, and a splendid name. Therefore we determined with a strong, resolute, insatiate spirit of passion, to make the most—the best—of the few months that remained to us, of that our wild, free, and romantic existence, as yet untrammelled by those inexorable laws, which, once launched into the world, all alike—young and old—must obey. Our books were flung aside—nor did our old master and minister frown—for he grudged not to the boy he loved the remnant of the dream about to be rolled away like the dawn's rosy clouds. We demanded with our eye—not with our voice—one long holyday, throughout that our last autumn, on to the pale farewell blossoms of the Christmas rose. With our rod we went earlier to the loch or river; but we had not known thoroughly our own soul—for now we angled less passionately—less perseveringly than was our wont of yore—sitting in a pensive—a melancholy—a miserable dream, by the dashing waterfall—or the murmuring wave. With our gun we plunged earlier in the morning into the forest, and we returned later at eve—but less earnest—less eager were we to hear the cushat's moan from his yew-tree—to see the hawk's shadow on the glade, as he hung aloft on the sky. A thousand dead

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thoughts came to life again in the gloom of the woods —and we sometimes did wring our hands in an agony of grief, to know that our eyes should not behold the birch-tree brightening there with another spring.

Then every visit we paid to cottage or to shieling was felt to be a farewell; there was something mournful in the smiles on the sweet faces of the ruddy rustics, with their silken snoods, to whom we used to whisper harmless love-meanings, in which their was no evil guile; we regarded the solemn toil-and-care-worn countenances of the old with a profounder emotion than had ever touched our hearts in the hour of our more thoughtless joy; and the whole life of those dwellers among the woods, and the moors, and the mountains, seemed to us far more affecting now that we saw deeper into it, in the light of a melancholy sprung from the conviction that the time was close at hand when we should mingle with it no more. The thoughts that possessed our most secret bosom failed not by the least observant to be discovered in our open eyes. They who had liked us before, now loved us; our faults, our follies, the insolencies of our reckless boyhood, were all forgotten; whatever had been our sins, pride towards the poor was never among the number; we had shunned not stooping our head beneath the humblest lintel; our mite had been given to the widow who had lost her own; quarrelsome with the young we might sometimes have been, for boyblood is soon heated, and boils before a defying eye; but in one thing at least we were Spartans, we revered the head of old age.

And many at last were the kind—some the sad farewells, erelong whispered by us at gloaming among the glens. Let them rest for ever silent amidst that music in the memory which is felt, not heard—its blessing mute though breathing, like an inarticulate prayer! But to Thee—O palest Phantom—clothed in white raiment, not like unto a ghost risen with its grave-clothes to appal, but like a seraph descending from the skies to bless—unto Thee will we dare to speak, as through the mist of years back comes thy yet unfaded beauty, charming us, while we cannot choose but weep, with the selfsame vision that often glided before us long ago in the wilderness, and at the sound of our voice would pause for a little while, and then pass by, like a white bird from the sea, floating unscared close by the shepherd's head, or alighting to trim its plumes on a knoll far up an inland glen! Death seems not to have touched that face, pale though it be—lifelike is the waving of those gentle hands—and the soft, sweet, low music which now we hear, steals not sure from lips hushed by the burial mould! Restored by the power of love, she stands before us as she stood of yore. Not one of all the hairs of her golden head was singed by the lightning that shivered the tree under which the child had run for shelter from the flashing sky. But in a moment the blue light in her dewy eyes was dimmed—and never again did she behold either flower or star. Yet all the images of all the things she had loved remained in her memory, clear and distinct as the things themselves before unextinguished eyes—and ere three summers had flown over her

head, which, like the blossom of some fair perennial flower, in heaven's gracious dew and sunshine each season lifted its loveliness higher and higher in the light—she could trip her singing way through the wide wilderness, all by her joyful self, led, as all believed, nor erred they in so believing, by an angel's hand! When the primroses peeped through the reviving grass upon the vernal braes, they seemed to give themselves into her fingers; and 'twas thought they hung longer unfaded round her neck or forehead than if they had been left to drink the dew on their native bed. The linnets ceased not their lays, though her garment touched the broom-stalk on which they sang. The cushat, as she thrid her way through the wood, continued to croon in her darksome tree—and the lark, although just dropped from the cloud, was cheered by her presence into a new passion of song, and mounted over her head, as if it were his first matin hymn. All the creatures of the earth and air manifestly loved the Wanderer of the Wilderness—and as for human beings, she was named, in their pity, their wonder, and their delight, the Blind Beauty of the Moor!

She was an only child, and her mother had died in giving her birth. And now her father, stricken by one of the many cruel diseases that shorten the lives of shepherds on the hills, was bed-ridden—and he was poor. Of all words ever syllabled by human lips, the most blessed is —Charity. No manna now in the wilderness is rained from heaven—for the mouths of the hungry need it not in this our Christian land. A few goats feeding among the rocks gave them milk, and there was bread for them

in each neighbour's house—neighbour though miles afar —as the sacred duty came round—and the unrepining poor sent the grateful child away with their prayers.

One evening, returning to the hut with her usual song, she danced up to her father's face on his rushy bed, and it was cold in death. If she shrieked—if she fainted —there was but one Ear that heard, one Eye that saw her in her swoon. Not now floating light like a small moving cloud unwilling to leave the flowery braes, though it be to melt in heaven, but driven along like a shroud of flying mist before the tempest, she came upon us in the midst of that dreary moss; and at the sound of our voice, fell down with clasped hands at our feet— "My father's dead!" Had the hut put already on the strange, dim, desolate look of mortality? For people came walking fast down the braes, and in a little while there was a group round us, and we bore her back again to her dwelling in our arms. As for us, we had been on our way to bid the fair creature and her father farewell. How could she have lived—an utter orphan—in such a world! The holy power that is in Innocence would for ever have remained with her; but Innocence longs to be away, when her sister Joy has departed; and 'tis sorrowful to see the one on earth, when the other has gone to Heaven! This sorrow none of us had long to see; for though a flower, when withered at the root, and doomed ere eve to perish, may yet look to the careless eye the same as when it blossomed in its pride—yet its leaves, still green, are not as once they were—its bloom, though fair, is faded—and at set of sun, the dews shall find it in

decay, and fall unfelt on its petals. Ere Sabbath came, the orphan child was dead. Methinks we see now her little funeral. Her birth had been the humblest of the humble; and though all in life had loved her, it was thought best that none should be asked to the funeral of her and her father, but two or three friends; the old clergyman himself walked at the head of the father's coffin—we at the head of the daughter's—for this was granted unto our exceeding love;—and thus passed away for ever the Blind Beauty of the Moor!

Yet sometimes to a more desperate passion than had ever before driven us over the wilds, did we deliver up ourselves entire, and pursue our pastime like one doomed to be a wild huntsman under some spell of magic. Let us, ere we go away from these high haunts and be no more seen—let us away far up the Great Glen, beyond the Echo-cliff, and with our rifle—'twas once the rifle of Emilius Godfrey—let us stalk the red-deer. In that chase or forest the antlers lay not thick, as now they lie on the Athole Braes; they were still a rare sight—and often and often had Godfrey and we gone up and down the Glen, without a single glimpse of buck or doe rising up from among the heather. But as the true angler will try every cast on the river, miles up and down, if he has reason to know that but one single fish has run up from the sea—so we, a true hunter, neither grudged nor wearied to stand for hours, still as the heron by the stream, hardly in hope, but satisfied with the possibility, that a deer might pass by us in the desert. Steadiest and strongest is self-fed passion springing in spite of circum-

stance. When blows the warm showery south-west wind, the trouts turn up their yellow sides at every dropping of the fly on the curling water—and the angler is soon sated with the perpetual play. But once—twice—thrice —during a long blustering day—the sullen plunge of a salmon is sufficient for that day's joy. Still, therefore, still as a cairn that stands for ever on the hill, or rather as the shadow on a dial, that though it moves is never seen to move, day after day were we on our station in the Great Glen. A loud, wild, wrathful, and savage cry from some huge animal made our heart leap to our mouth, and bathed our forehead in sweat. We looked up—and a red deer—a stag of ten—the king of the forest—stood with all his antlers, snuffing the wind, but yet blind to our figure overshadowed by a rock. The rifle-ball pierced his heart—and leaping up far higher than our head, he tumbled in terrific death, and lay stone-still before our starting eyes amid the rustling of the strong-bented heather! There we stood surveying him for a long triumphing hour. Ghastly were his glazed eyes—and ghastlier his long bloody tongue, bitten through at the very root in agony. The branches of his antlers pierced the sward like swords. His bulk seemed mightier in death even than when it was crowned with that kingly head, snuffing the north-wind. In other two hours we were down at Moor-edge and up again, with an eager train, to the head of the Great Glen, coming and going a distance of a dozen long miles. A hay-waggon forced its way through the bogs and over the braes—and on our return into the inhabited country, we

were met by shoals of peasants, men, women, and children, huzzaing over the Prey; for not for many years—never since the funeral of the old lord—had the antlers of a red-deer been seen by them trailing along the heather.

Fifty years and more—and oh! my weary soul! half a century took a long long time to die away, in gloom and in glory, in pain and pleasure, in storms through which were afraid to fly even the spirit's most eagle-winged raptures, in calms that rocked all her feelings like azure-plumed halcyons to rest—though now to look back upon it, what seems it all but a transitory dream of toil and trouble, of which the smiles, the sighs, the tears, the groans, were all alike vain as the forgotten sunbeams and the clouds! Fifty years and more are gone—and this is the Twelfth of August, Eighteen hundred and twenty-eight; and all the Highland mountains have since dawn been astir, and thundering to the impetuous sportsmen's joys! Our spirit burns within us, but our limbs are palsied, and our feet must brush the heather no more. Lo! how beautifully these fast-travelling pointers do their work on that black mountain's breast! intersecting it into parallelograms, and squares, and circles, and now all astoop on a sudden, as if frozen to death! Higher up among the rocks, and cliffs, and stones, we see a stripling, whose ambition it is to strike the sky with his forehead, and wet his hair in the misty cloud, pursuing the ptarmigan now in their variegated summer-dress, seen even among the unmelted snows. The scene shifts—and high up on the heath above the Linn of Dee, in the Forest of Brae-

mar, the Thane—God bless him—has stalked the red-deer to his lair, and now lays his unerring rifle at rest on the stump of the Witch's Oak. Never shall Eld deaden our sympathies with the pastimes of our fellow men any more than with their highest raptures, their profoundest griefs. Blessings on the head of every true sportsman on flood, or field, or fell; nor shall we take it at all amiss should any one of them, in return for the pleasure he may have enjoyed from these our Fyttes, perused in smoky cabin during a rainy day, to the peat-reek flavour of the glorious Glenlivet, send us, by the Inverness coach, Aberdeen steam-packet, or any other rapid conveyance, a basket of game, red, black, or brown, or peradventure a haunch of the red-deer.

Reader! be thou a male, bold as the Tercel Gentle—or a female, fair as the Falcon—a male, stern as an old Stag—or a female, soft as a young Doe—we entreat thee to think kindly of Us and of our Article—and to look in love or in friendship on Christopher in his Sporting Jacket, now come to the close of his Three Fyttes, into which he had fallen—out of one into another—and from which he has now been revived by the application of a little salt to his mouth, and then a caulker. Nor think that, rambling as we have been, somewhat after the style of thinking common in sleep, there has been no method in our madness, no *lucidus ordo* in our dream. All the pages are instinct with one spirit—our thoughts and our feelings have all followed one another, according to the most approved principles of association—and a fine proportion has been unconsciously preserved. The

article may be likened to some noble tree, which—although here and there a branch have somewhat overgrown its brother above or below it, an arm stretched itself out into further gloom on this side than on that, so that there are irregularities in the umbrage—is still disfigured not by those sports and freaks of nature working on a great scale, and stands, magnificent object! equal to an old castle, on the cliff above the cataract. Wo and shame to the sacrilegious hand that would lop away one budding bough! Undisturbed let the tame and wild creatures of the region, in storm or sunshine, find shelter or shade under the calm circumference of its green old age.

TALE OF EXPIATION.

MARGARET BURNSIDE was an orphan. Her parents, who had been the poorest people in the parish, had died when she was a mere child; and as they had left no near relatives, there were few or none to care much about the desolate creature, who might be well said to have been left friendless in the world. True that the feeling of charity is seldom wholly wanting in any heart; but it is generally but a cold feeling among hard-working folk, towards objects out of the narrow circle of their own family affections, and selfishness has a ready and strong excuse in necessity. There seems, indeed, to be a sort of chance in the lot of the orphan offspring of paupers. On some the eye of Christian benevolence falls at the very first moment of their uttermost destitution—and their worst sorrows, instead of beginning, terminate with the tears shed over their parents' graves. They are taken by the hands, as soon as their hands have been stretched out for protection, and admitted as inmates into households, whose doors, had their fathers and mothers been alive, they would never have darkened. The light of comfort falls upon them during the gloom of grief,

and attends them all their days. Others, again, are overlooked at the first fall of affliction, as if by some unaccountable fatality; the wretchedness with which all have become familiar, no one very tenderly pities; and thus the orphan, reconciling herself to the extreme hardships of her condition, lives on uncheered by those sympathies out of which grow both happiness and virtue, and yielding by degrees to the constant pressure of her lot, becomes poor in spirit as in estate, and either vegetates like an almost worthless weed that is carelessly trodden on by every foot, or if by nature born a flower, in time loses her lustre, and all her days leads the life not so much of a servant as of a slave.

Such, till she was twelve years old, had been the fate of Margaret Burnside. Of a slender form and weak constitution, she had never been able for much work; and thus from one discontented and harsh master and mistress to another, she had been transferred from house to house—always the poorest—till she came to be looked on as an encumbrance rather than a help in any family, and thought hardly worth her bread. Sad and sickly she sat on the braes herding the kine. It was supposed that she was in a consumption—and as the shadow of death seemed to lie on the neglected creature's face, a feeling something like love was awakened towards her in the heart of pity, for which she showed her gratitude by still attending to all household tasks with an alacrity beyond her strength. Few doubted that she was dying—and it was plain that she thought so herself; for the Bible, which, in her friendlessness, she had always read

more than other children, who were too happy to reflect often on the Word of that Being from whom their happiness flowed, was now, when leisure permitted, seldom or never out of her hands; and in lonely places, where there was no human ear to hearken, did the dying girl often support her heart, when quaking in natural fears of the grave, by singing to herself hymns and psalms. But her hour was not yet come—though by the inscrutable decrees of Providence doomed to be hideous with almost inexpiable guilt. As for herself—she was innocent as the linnet that sang beside her in the broom, and innocent was she to be up to the last throbbings of her religious heart. When the sunshine fell on the leaves of her Bible, the orphan seemed to see in the holy words, brightening through the radiance, assurances of forgiveness of all her sins—small sins indeed—yet to her humble and contrite heart exceeding great—and to be pardoned only by the intercession of Him who died for us on the tree. Often, when clouds were in the sky, and blackness covered the Book, hope died away from the discoloured page—and the lonely creature wept and sobbed over the doom denounced on all who sin, and repent not—whether in deed or in thought. And thus religion became within her an awful thing—till, in her resignation, she feared to die. But look on that flower by the hill-side path, withered, as it seems, beyond the power of sun and air and dew and rain to restore it to life. Next day, you happen to return to the place, its leaves are of a dazzling green, its blossoms of a dazzling crimson. So was it with this Orphan. Nature, as if

kindling towards her in sudden love, not only restored her in a few weeks to life—but to perfect health; and erelong she, whom few had looked at, and for whom still fewer cared, was acknowledged to be the fairest girl in all the parish—while she continued to sit, as she had always done from very childhood, on the *poor's form* in the lobby of the kirk. Such a face, such a figure, and such a manner, in one so poorly attired and so meanly placed, attracted the eyes of the young Ladies in the Patron's Gallery. Margaret Burnside was taken under their especial protection—sent for two years to a superior school, where she was taught all things useful for persons in humble life—and while yet scarcely fifteen, returning to her native parish, was appointed teacher of a small school of her own, to which were sent all the girls who could be spared from home, from those of parents poor as her own had been, up to those of the farmers and small proprietors, who knew the blessings of a good education—and that without it, the minister may preach in vain. And thus Margaret Burnside grew and blossomed like the lily of the field—and every eye blessed her—and she drew her breath in gratitude, piety, and peace.

Thus a few happy and useful years passed by—and it was forgotten by all—but herself—that Margaret Burnside was an orphan. But to be without one near and dear blood-relative in all the world, must often, even to the happy heart of youthful innocence, be more than a pensive—a painful thought; and therefore, though Margaret Burnside was always cheerful among her little

scholars, yet in the retirement of her own room, (a pretty parlour, with a window looking into a flower-garden,) and on her walks among the braes, her mien was somewhat melancholy, and her eyes wore that touching expression, which seems doubtfully to denote—neither joy nor sadness—but a habit of soul which, in its tranquillity, still partakes of the mournful, as if memory dwelt often on past sorrows, and hope scarcely ventured to indulge in dreams of future repose. That profound orphan-feeling embued her whole character; and sometimes when the young Ladies from the Castle smiled praises upon her, she retired in gratitude to her chamber —and wept.

Among the friends at whose houses she visited were the family at Moorside, the highest hill-farm in the parish, and on which her father had been a hind. It consisted of the master, a man whose head was grey, his son and daughter, and a grandchild, her scholar, whose parents were dead. Gilbert Adamson had long been a widower—indeed his wife had never been in the parish, but had died abroad. He had been a soldier in his youth and prime of manhood; and when he came to settle at Moorside, he had been looked at with no very friendly eyes; for evil rumours of his character had preceded his arrival there—and in that peaceful pastoral parish, far removed from the world's strife, suspicions, without any good reason perhaps, had attached themselves to the morality and religion of a man, who had seen much foreign service, and had passed the best years of his life in the wars. It was long before these suspicions faded

away, and with some they still existed in an invincible feeling of dislike, or even aversion. But the natural fierceness and ferocity which, as these peaceful dwellers among the hills imagined, had at first, in spite of his efforts to control them, often dangerously exhibited themselves in fiery outbreaks, advancing age had gradually subdued; Gilbert Adamson had grown a hard-working and industrious man; affected, if he followed it not in sincerity, even an austerely religious life; and as he possessed more than common sagacity and intelligence, he had acquired at last, if not won, a certain ascendency in the parish, even over many whose hearts never opened nor warmed towards him—so that he was now an elder of the kirk—and, as the most unwilling were obliged to acknowledge, a just steward to the poor. His grey hairs were not honoured, but it would not be too much to say that they were respected. Many who had doubted him before came to think they had done him injustice, and sought to wipe away their fault by regarding him with esteem, and showing themselves willing to interchange all neighbourly kindnesses and services with all the family at Moorside. His son, though somewhat wild and unsteady, and too much addicted to the fascinating pastimes of flood and field, often so ruinous to the sons of labour, and rarely long pursued against the law without vitiating the whole character, was a favourite with all the parish. Singularly handsome, and with manners above his birth, Ludovic was welcome wherever he went, both with young and old. No merry-making could deserve the name without him; and at all meetings for the display of feats of

strength and agility, far and wide through more counties than one he was the champion. Nor had he received a mean education. All that the parish schoolmaster could teach he knew; and having been the darling companion of all the gentleman's sons in the Manse, the faculties of his mind had kept pace with theirs, and from them he had caught unconsciously that demeanour so far superior to what could have been expected from one in his humble condition, but which, at the same time, seemed so congenial with his happy nature as to be readily acknowledged to be one of its original gifts. Of his sister, Alice, it is sufficient to say, that she was the bosom-friend of Margaret Burnside, and that all who saw their friendship felt that it was just. The small parentless grand-daughter was also dear to Margaret—more than perhaps her heart knew, because that, like herself, she was an orphan. But the creature was also a merry and a madcap child, and her freakish pranks, and playful perversenesses, as she tossed her head in untameable glee, and went dancing and singing, like a bird on the boughs of a tree, all day long, by some strange sympathies entirely won the heart of her who, throughout all her own childhood, had been familiar with grief, and a lonely shedder of tears. And thus did Margaret love her, it might be said, even with a very mother's love. She generally passed her free Saturday afternoons at Moorside, and often slept there all night with little Ann in her bosom. At such times Ludovic was never from home, and many a Sabbath he walked with her to the kirk—all the family together—and *once* by themselves

for miles along the moor—a forenoon of perfect sunshine, which returned upon him in his agony on his dying day.

No one said, no one thought that Ludovic and Margaret were lovers—nor were they, though well worthy indeed of each other's love; for the orphan's whole heart was filled and satisfied with a sense of duty, and all its affections were centred in her school, where all eyes blessed her, and where she had been placed for the good of all those gladsome creatures, by them who had rescued her from the penury that kills the soul, and whose gracious bounty she remembered even in her sleep. In her prayers she beseeched God to bless them rather than the wretch on her knees—their images, their names, were ever before her eyes and on her ear; and next to that peace of mind which passeth all understanding, and comes from the footstool of God into the humble, lowly, and contrite heart, was to that orphan, day and night, waking or sleeping, the bliss of her gratitude. And thus Ludovic to her was a brother, and no more; a name sacred as that of sister, by which she always called her Alice, and was so called in return. But to Ludovic, who had a soul of fire, Margaret was dearer far than ever sister was to the brother whom, at the sacrifice of her own life, she might have rescued from death. Go where he might, a phantom was at his side—a pale fair face for ever fixed its melancholy eyes on his, as if foreboding something dismal even when they faintly smiled; and once he awoke at midnight, when all the house were asleep, crying, with shrieks, "O God of mercy! Margaret is murdered!" Mysterious passion of

Love! that darkens its own dreams of delight with unimaginable horrors! Shall we call such dire bewilderment the superstition of troubled fantasy, or the inspiration of the prophetic soul!

From what seemingly insignificant sources—and by means of what humble instruments—may this life's best happiness be diffused over the households of industrious men! Here was the orphan daughter of forgotten paupers, both dead ere she could speak; herself, during all her melancholy childhood, a pauper even more enslaved than ever they had been—one of the most neglected and unvalued of all God's creatures—who, had she then died, would have been buried in some nettled nook of the kirkyard, nor her grave been watered almost by one single tear—suddenly brought out from the cold and cruel shade in which she had been withering away, by the interposition of human but angelic hands, into the heaven's most gracious sunshine, where all at once her beauty blossomed like the rose. She, who for so many years had been even begrudgingly fed on the poorest and scantiest fare, by Penury ungrateful for all her weak but zealous efforts to please by doing her best, in sickness and sorrow, at all her tasks, in or out of doors, and in all weathers, however rough and severe—was now raised to the rank of a moral, intellectual, and religious being, and presided over, tended, and instructed many little ones, far far happier in their childhood than it had been her lot to be, and all growing up beneath her now untroubled eyes, in innocence, love, and joy inspired into their hearts by her their young and happy benefactress.

Not a human dwelling in all the parish, that had not reason to be thankful to Margaret Burnside. She taught them to be pleasant in their manners, neat in their persons, rational in their minds, pure in their hearts, and industrious in all their habits. Rudeness, coarseness, sullenness, all angry fits, and all idle dispositions—the besetting vices and sins of the children of the poor, whose home-education is often so miserably, and almost necessarily neglected—did this sweet Teacher, by the divine influence of meekness never ruffled, and tenderness never troubled, in a few months subdue and overcome—till her school-room, every day in the week, was, in its cheerfulness, sacred as a Sabbath, and murmured from morn till eve with the hum of perpetual happiness. The effects were soon felt in every house. All floors were tidier, and order and regularity enlivened every hearth. It was the pride of her scholars to get their own little gardens behind their parents' huts to bloom like that of the Brae—and, in imitation of that flowery porch, to train up the pretty creepers on the wall. In the kirkyard, a smiling group every Sabbath forenoon waited for her at the gate—and walked, with her at their head, into the House of God—a beautiful procession to all their parents' eyes—one by one dropping away into their own seats, as the band moved along the little lobby, and the minister sitting in the pulpit all the while, looked solemnly down upon the fair flock—the shepherd of their souls!

It was Sabbath, but Margaret Burnside was not in the kirk. The congregation had risen to join in prayer,

when the great door was thrown open, and a woman, apparelled as for the house of worship, but wild and ghastly in her face and eyes as a maniac hunted by evil spirits, burst in upon the service, and, with uplifted hands, beseeched the man of God to forgive her irreverent entrance, for that the foulest and most unnatural murder had been done, and that her own eyes had seen the corpse of Margaret Burnside lying on the moor in a pool of blood! The congregation gave one groan, and then an outcry as if the roof of the kirk had been toppling over their heads. All cheeks waxed white, women fainted, and the firmest heart quaked with terror and pity, as once and again the affrighted witness, in the same words, described the horrid spectacle, and then rushed out into the open air, followed by hundreds, who for some minutes had been palsy-stricken; and now the kirkyard was all in a tumult round the body of her who lay in a swoon. In the midst of that dreadful ferment, there were voices crying aloud that the poor woman was mad, and that such horror could not be beneath the sun; for such a perpetration on the Sabbath-day, and first heard of just as the prayers of his people were about to ascend to the Father of all mercies, shocked belief, and doubt struggled with despair as in the helpless shudderings of some dream of blood. The crowd were at last prevailed on by their pastor to disperse, and sit down on the tombstones, and water being sprinkled over the face of her who still lay in that mortal swoon, and the air suffered to circulate freely round her, she again opened her glassy eyes, and raising herself on her elbow, stared on the

multitude, all gathered there so wan and silent, and shrieked out, "The Day of Judgment! The Day of Judgment!"

The aged minister raised her on her feet, and led her to a grave, on which she sat down, and hid her face on his knees. "O that I should have lived to see the day —but dreadful are the decrees of the Most High—and she whom we all loved has been cruelly murdered! Carry me with you, people, and I will show you where lies her corpse."

"Where—where is Ludovic Adamson?" cried a hoarse voice which none there had ever heard before; and all eyes were turned in one direction; but none knew who had spoken, and all again was hush. Then all at once a hundred voices repeated the same words, "Where—where is Ludovic Adamson?" and there was no reply. Then, indeed, was the kirkyard in an angry and a wrathful ferment, and men looked far into each other's eyes for confirmation of their suspicions. And there was whispering about things, that, though in themselves light as air, seemed now charged with hideous import; and then arose sacred appeals to Heaven's eternal justice, horridly mingled with oaths and curses; and all the crowd, springing to their feet, pronounced, "that no other but he could be the murderer."

It was remembered now, that for months past Margaret Burnside had often looked melancholy—that her visits had been less frequent to Moorside; and one person in the crowd said, that a few weeks ago she had come upon them suddenly in a retired place, when Mar-

garet was weeping bitterly, and Ludovic tossing his arms, seemingly in wrath and distraction. All agreed that of late he had led a disturbed and reckless life—and that something dark and suspicious had hung about him, wherever he went, as if he were haunted by an evil conscience. But did not strange men sometimes pass through the Moor—squalid mendicants, robber-like, from the far-off city—one by one, yet seemingly belonging to the same gang—with bludgeons in their hands—half-naked, and often drunken in their hunger, as at the doors of lonesome houses they demanded alms; or more like foot-pads than beggars, with stern gestures, rising up from the ditches on the way-side, stopped the frightened women and children going upon errands, and thanklessly received pence from the poor? One of them must have been the murderer! But then, again, the whole tide of suspicion would set in upon Ludovic—her lover; for the darker and more dreadful the guilt, the more welcome is it to the fears of the imagination when its waking dreams are floating in blood.

A tall figure came forward from the porch, and all was silence when the congregation beheld the Father of the suspected criminal. He stood still as a tree in a calm day—trunk, limbs, moved not—and his grey head was uncovered. He then stretched out his arm, not in an imploring, but in a commanding attitude, and essayed to speak; but his white lips quivered, and his tongue refused its office. At last, almost fiercely, he uttered, "Who dares denounce my son?" and like the growling thunder, the crowd cried, "All—all—he is the murder-

er!" Some said that the old man smiled; but it could have been but a convulsion of the features—outraged nature's wrung-out and writhing expression of disdain, to show how a father's love brooks the cruelty of foolish falsehood and injustice.

Men, women, and children—all whom grief and horror had not made helpless—moved away towards the Moor—the woman who had seen the sight leading the way; for now her whole strength had returned to her, and she was drawn and driven by an irresistible passion to look again at what had almost destroyed her judgment. Now they were miles from the kirk, and over some brushwood, at the edge of a morass some distance from the common footpath, crows were seen diving and careering in the air, and a raven flapping suddenly out of the covert, sailed away with a savage croak along a range of cliffs. The whole multitude stood stock-still at that carrion-sound. The guide said shudderingly, in a low hurried voice, "See, see—that is her mantle"—and there indeed Margaret lay, all in a heap, maimed, mangled, murdered, with a hundred gashes. The corpse seemed as if it had been baked in frost, and was embedded in coagulated blood. Shreds and patches of her dress, torn away from her bosom, bestrewed the bushes—for many yards round about, there had been the trampling of feet, and a long lock of hair that had been torn from her temples, with the dews yet unmelted on it, was lying upon a plant of broom, a little way from the corpse. The first to lift the body from the horrid bed was Gilbert Adamson. He had been long familiar with death in all its ghastliness,

and all had now looked to him—forgetting for the moment that he was the father of the murderer—to perform the task from which they recoiled in horror. Resting on one knee, he placed the corpse on the other—and who could have believed, that even the most violent and cruel death could have wrought such a change on a face once so beautiful! All was distortion—and terrible it was to see the dim glazed eyes, fixedly open, and the orbs insensible to the strong sun that smote her face white as snow among the streaks as if left by bloody fingers! Her throat was all discoloured—and a silk handkerchief twisted into a cord, that had manifestly been used in the murder, was of a redder hue than when it had veiled her breast. No one knows what horror his eyes are able to look on, till they are tried. A circle of stupefied gazers was drawn by a horrid fascination closer and closer round the corpse—and women stood there holding children by the hands, and fainted not, but observed the sight, and shuddered without shrieking, and stood there all dumb as ghosts. But the body was now borne along by many hands—at first none knew in what direction, till many voices muttered, "To Moorside—to Moorside"—and in an hour it was laid on the bed in which Margaret Burnside had so often slept with her beloved little Ann in her bosom.

The hand of some one had thrown a cloth over the corpse. The room was filled with people—but all their power and capacity of horror had been exhausted—and the silence was now almost like that which attends a natural death, when all the neighbours are assembled for

the funeral. Alice, with little Ann beside her, kneeled at the bed, nor feared to lean her head close to the covered corpse—sobbing out syllables that showed how passionately she prayed—and that she and her little niece—and, oh! for that unhappy father—were delivering themselves up into the hands of God. That father knelt not—neither did he sit down—nor move—nor groan—but stood at the foot of the bed, with arms folded almost sternly—and with his eyes fixed on the sheet, in which there seemed to be neither ruth nor dread—but only an austere composure, which, were it indeed but resignation to that dismal decree of Providence, had been most sublime—but who can see into the heart of a man either righteous or wicked, and know what may be passing there, breathed from the gates of heaven or of hell!

Soon as the body had been found, shepherds and herdsmen, fleet of foot as the deer, had set off to scour the country far and wide, hill and glen, mountain and morass, moor and wood, for the murderer. If he be on the face of the earth, and not self-plunged in despairing suicide into some quagmire, he will be found—for all the population of many districts are now afoot, and precipices are clomb till now brushed but by the falcons. A figure, like that of a man, is seen by some of the hunters from a hill top, lying among the stones by the side of a solitary loch. They separate, and descend upon him, and then gathering in, they behold the man whom they seek—Ludovic Adamson, the murderer.

His face is pale and haggard—yet flushed as if by a fever centred in his heart. That is no dress for the

Sabbath-day—soiled and savage-looking—and giving to the eyes that search an assurance of guilt. He starts to his feet, as they think, like some wild beast surprised in his lair, and gathering itself up to fight or fly. But—strange enormity—a Bible is in his hand! And the shepherd who first seized him, taking the book out of his grasp, looks into the page, and reads, "Whoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be surely shed." On a leaf is written, in her own well-known hand, "The gift of Margaret Burnside!" Not a word is said by his captors—they offer no needless violence—no indignities—but answer all enquiries of surprise and astonishment (O! can one so young be so hardened in wickedness!) by a stern silence, and upbraiding eyes, that like daggers must stab his heart. At last he walks doggedly and sullenly along, and refuses to speak—yet his tread is firm—there is no want of composure in his face—now that the first passion of fear or anger has left it; and now that they have the murderer in their clutch, some begin almost to pity him, and others to believe, or at least to hope, that he may be innocent. As yet they have said not a word of the crime of which they accuse him; but let him try to master the expression of his voice and his eyes as he may, guilt is in those stealthy glances—guilt is in those reckless tones. And why does he seek to hide his right hand in his bosom? And whatever he may affect to say—they ask him not—most certainly that stain on his shirt-collar is blood. But now they are at Moorside.

There is still a great crowd all round about the house—in the garden—and at the door—and a troubled cry

announces that the criminal has been taken, and is close at hand. His father meets him at the gate; and, kneeling down, holds up his clasped hands, and says, "My son, if thou art guilty, confess, and die." The criminal angrily waves his father aside, and walks towards the door. "Fools! fools! what mean ye by this? What crime has been committed? And how dare ye to think me the criminal? Am I like a murderer?"—"We never spoke to him of the murder—we never spoke to him of the murder!" cried one of the men who now held him by the arm; and all assembled then exclaimed, "Guilty, guilty—that one word will hang him! O, pity, pity, for his father and poor sister—this will break their hearts!" Appalled, yet firm of foot, the prisoner forced his way into the house; and turning, in his confusion, into the chamber on the left, there he beheld the corpse of the murdered on the bed—for the sheet had been removed—as yet not laid out, and disfigured and deformed just as she had been found on the moor, in the same misshapen heap of death! One long insane glare—one shriek, as if all his heartstrings at once had burst—and then down fell the strong man on the floor like lead. One trial was past which no human hardihood could endure—another, and yet another, awaits him; but them he will bear as the guilty brave have often borne them, and the most searching eye shall not see him quail at the bar or on the scaffold.

They lifted the stricken wretch from the floor, placed him in a chair, and held him upright, till he should revive from the fit. And he soon did revive; for health

flowed in all his veins, and he had the strength of a giant. But when his senses returned, there was none to pity him; for the shock had given an expression of guilty horror to all his looks, and, like a man walking in his sleep under the temptation of some dreadful dream, he moved with fixed eyes towards the bed, and looking at the corpse, gobbled in hideous laughter, and then wept and tore his hair like a distracted woman or a child. Then he stooped down as he would kiss the face, but staggered back, and, covering his eyes with his hands, uttered such a groan as is sometimes heard rending the sinner's breast when the avenging Furies are upon him in his dreams. All who heard it felt that he was guilty; and there was a fierce cry through the room of, "Make him touch the body, and if he be the murderer, it will bleed!"—"Fear not, Ludovic, to touch it, my boy," said his father; "bleed afresh it will not, for thou art innocent; and savage though now they be who once were proud to be thy friends, even they will believe thee guiltless when the corpse refuses to bear witness against thee, and not a drop leaves its quiet heart!" But his son spake not a word, nor did he seem to know that his father had spoken; but he suffered himself to be led passively towards the bed. One of the bystanders took his hand and placed it on the naked breast, when out of the corners of the teeth-clenched mouth, and out of the swollen nostrils, two or three blood-drops visibly oozed, and a sort of shrieking shout declared the sacred faith of all the crowd in the dreadful ordeal. "What body is this? 'tis all over blood!" said the prisoner, looking with

an idiot vacancy on the faces that surrounded him. But now the sheriff of the county entered the room, along with some officers of justice, and he was spared any further shocks from that old saving superstition. His wrists soon after were manacled. These were all the words he had uttered since he recovered from the fit; and he seemed now in a state of stupor.

Ludovic Adamson, after examination of witnesses who crowded against him from many unexpected quarters, was committed that very Sabbath night to prison on a charge of murder. On the Tuesday following, the remains of Margaret Burnside were interred. All the parish were at the funeral. In Scotland it is not customary for females to join in the last simple ceremonies of death. But in this case they did; and all her scholars, in the same white dresses in which they used to walk with her at their head into the kirk on Sabbaths, followed the bier. Alice and little Ann were there, nearest the coffin, and the father of him who had wrought all this wo was one of its supporters. The head of the murdered girl rested, it might be said, on his shoulder—but none can know the strength which God gives to his servants—and all present felt for him, as he walked steadily under that dismal burden, a pity, and even an affection, which they had been unable to yield to him ere he had been so sorely tried. The Ladies from the Castle were among the other mourners, and stood by the open grave. A sunnier day had never shone from heaven, and that very grave itself partook of the brightness, as the coffin—with the gilt letters, "Margaret

Burnside, Aged 18"—was let down, and in the darkness below disappeared. No flowers were sprinkled there—nor afterwards planted on the turf—vain offerings of unavailing sorrow! But in that nook—beside the bodies of her poor parents—she was left for the grass to grow over her, as over the other humble dead; and nothing but the very simplest headstone was placed there, with a sentence from Scripture below the name. There was less weeping, less sobbing, than at many other funerals; for as sure as Mercy ruled the skies, all believed that she was there—all knew it, just as if the gates of heaven had opened and showed her a white-robed spirit at the right hand of the throne. And why should any rueful lamentation have been wailed over the senseless dust? But on the way home over the hills, and in the hush of evening beside their hearths, and in the stillness of night on their beds—all—young and old—all did nothing but weep!

For weeks—such was the pity, grief, and awe inspired by this portentous crime and lamentable calamity, that all the domestic ongoings in all the houses far and wide, were melancholy and mournful, as if the country had been fearing a visitation of the plague. Sin, it was felt, had brought not only sorrow on the parish, but shame that ages would not wipe away; and strangers, as they travelled through the moor, would point the place where the foulest murder had been committed in all the annals of crime. As for the family at Moorside, the daughter had their boundless compassion, though no eye had seen her since the funeral; but people, in speak-

ing of the father, would still shake their heads, and put their fingers to their lips, and say to one another in whispers, that Gilbert Adamson had once been a bold, bad man—that his religion, in spite of all his repulsive austerity, wore not the aspect of truth—and that, had he held a stricter and a stronger hand on the errors of his misguided son, this foul deed had not been perpetrated, nor that wretched sinner's soul given to perdition. Yet others had gentler and humaner thoughts. They remembered him walking along God-supported beneath the bier—and at the mouth of the grave—and feared to look on that head—formerly grizzled, but now quite grey—when on the very first Sabbath after the murder he took his place in the elder's seat, and was able to stand up, along with the rest of the congregation, when the minister prayed for peace to his soul, and hoped for the deliverance out of jeopardy of him now lying in bonds. A low Amen went all round the kirk at these words; for the most hopeless called to mind that maxim of law, equity, and justice—that every man under accusation of crime should be held innocent till he is proved to be guilty. Nay, a human tribunal might condemn him, and yet might he stand acquitted before the tribunal of God.

There were various accounts of the behaviour of the prisoner. Some said that he was desperately hardened—others, sunk in sullen apathy and indifference—and one or two persons belonging to the parish who had seen him, declared that he seemed to care not for himself, but to be plunged in profound melancholy for the fate of

Margaret Burnside, whose name he involuntarily mentioned, and then bowed his head on his knees and wept. His guilt he neither admitted at that interview, nor denied; but he confessed that some circumstances bore hard against him, and that he was prepared for the event of his trial—condemnation and death. "But if you are not guilty, Ludovic, *who can be the murderer?* Not the slightest shade of suspicion has fallen on any other person—and did not, alas! the body bleed when" ——The unhappy wretch sprang up from the bed, it was said, at these words, and hurried like a madman back and forward along the stone floor of his cell. "Yea—yea!" at last he cried, "the mouth and nostrils of my Margaret did indeed bleed when they pressed down my hand on her cold bosom. It is God's truth!" "God's truth?"—"Yes—God's truth. I saw first one drop, and then another, trickle towards me—and I prayed to our Saviour to wipe them off before other eyes might behold the dreadful witnesses against me; but at that hour Heaven was most unmerciful—for those two small drops—as all of you saw—soon became a very stream—and all her face, neck, and breast—you saw it as well as I miserable—were at last drenched in blood. Then I may have confessed that I was guilty—did I, or did I not, confess it? Tell me—for I remember nothing distinctly;—but if I did—the judgment of offended Heaven, then punishing me for my sins, had made me worse than mad—and so had all your abhorrent eyes; and, men, if I did confess, it was the cruelty of God that drove me to it—and your cruelty—which was great;

for no pity had any one for me that day, though Margaret Burnside lay before me a murdered corpse—and a hoarse whisper came to my ear urging me to confess—I well believe from no human lips, but from the Father of Lies, who, at that hour, was suffered to leave the pit to ensnare my soul." Such was said to have been the main sense of what he uttered in the presence of two or three who had formerly been among his most intimate friends, and who knew not, on leaving his cell and coming into the open air, whether to think him innocent or guilty. As long as they thought they saw his eyes regarding them, and that they heard his voice speaking, they believed him innocent; but when the expression of the tone of his voice, and of the look of his eyes—which they had felt belonged to innocence—died away from their memory—then arose against him the strong, strange, circumstantial evidence, which, wisely or unwisely—lawyers and judges have said *cannot lie*—and then, in their hearts, one and all of them pronounced him guilty.

But had not his father often visited the prisoner's cell? Once—and once only; for in obedience to his son's passionate prayer, beseeching him—if there were any mercy left either on earth or in heaven—never more to enter that dungeon, the miserable parent had not again entered the prison; but he had been seen one morning at dawn, by one who knew his person, walking round and round the walls, staring up at the black building in distraction, especially at one small grated window in the north tower—and it is most probable that

he had been pacing his rounds there during all the night. Nobody could conjecture, however dimly, what was the meaning of his banishment from his son's cell. Gilbert Adamson, so stern to others, even to his own only daughter, had been always but too indulgent to his Ludovic—and had that lost wretch's guilt, so exceeding great, changed his heart into stone, and made the sight of his old father's grey hairs hateful to his eyes? But then the jailer, who had heard him imploring—beseeching—commanding his father to remain till after the trial at Moorside, said, that all the while the prisoner sobbed and wept like a child; and that when he unlocked the door of the cell, to let the old man out, it was a hard thing to tear away the arms and hands of Ludovic from his knees, while the father sat like a stone image on the bed, and kept his tearless eyes fixed sternly upon the wall, as if not a soul had been present, and he himself had been a criminal condemned next day to die.

The father had obeyed, *religiously*, that miserable injunction, and from religion it seemed he had found comfort. For Sabbath after Sabbath he was at the kirk—he stood, as he had been wont to do for years, at the poor's plate, and returned grave salutations to those who dropt their mite into the small sacred treasury—his eyes calmly, and even critically, regarded the pastor during prayer and sermon—and his deep bass voice was heard, as usual, through all the house of God, in the Psalms. On week-days, he was seen by passers-by to drive his flocks afield, and to overlook his sheep on the hill-pastures, or in the pen-fold; and as

it was still spring, and seed-time had been late this season, he was observed holding the plough, as of yore; nor had his skill deserted him—for the furrows were as straight as if drawn by a rule on paper—and soon bright and beautiful was the braird on all the low lands of his farm. The Comforter was with him, and, sorely as he had been tried, his heart was not yet wholly broken; and it was believed that, for years, he might outlive the blow that at first had seemed more than a mortal man might bear and be! Yet that his wo, though hidden, was dismal, all erelong knew, from certain tokens that intrenched his face—cheeks shrunk and fallen—brow not so much furrowed as scarred, eyes quenched, hair thinner and thinner far, as if he himself had torn it away in handfuls during the solitude of midnight—and now absolutely as white as snow; and over the whole man an indescribable ancientness far beyond his years—though they were many, and most of them had been passed in torrid climes—all showed how grief has its agonies as destructive as those of guilt, and those the most wasting when they work in the heart and in the brain, unrelieved by the shedding of one single tear—when the very soul turns dry as dust, and life is imprisoned, rather than mingled, in the decaying—the mouldering body!

The Day of Trial came, and all labour was suspended in the parish, as if it had been a mourning fast. Hundreds of people from this remote district poured into the circuit-town, and besieged the court-house. Horsemen were in readiness, soon as the verdict should

be returned, to carry the intelligence—of life or death—to all those glens. A few words will suffice to tell the trial, the nature of the evidence, and its issue. The prisoner, who stood at the bar in black, appeared—though miserably changed from a man of great muscular power and activity, a magnificent man, into a tall thin shadow—perfectly unappalled; but in a face so white, and wasted, and wo-begone, the most profound physiognomist could read not one faintest symptom either of hope or fear, trembling or trust, guilt or innocence. He hardly seemed to belong to this world, and stood fearfully and ghastlily conspicuous between the officers of justice, above all the crowd that devoured him with their eyes, all leaning towards the bar to catch the first sound of his voice, when to the indictment he should plead "Not Guilty." These words he did utter, in a hollow voice altogether passionless, and then was suffered to sit down, which he did in a manner destitute of all emotion. During all the many long hours of his trial, he never moved head, limbs, or body, except once, when he drank some water, which he had not asked for, but which was given to him by a friend. The evidence was entirely circumstantial, and consisted of a few damning facts, and of many of the very slightest sort, which, taken singly, seemed to mean nothing, but which, when considered all together, seemed to mean something against him—how much or how little, there were among the agitated audience many differing opinions. But slight as they were, either singly or together, they told fearfully against the pri-

soner, when connected with the fatal few which no ingenuity could ever explain away; and though ingenuity did all it could do, when wielded by eloquence of the highest order—and as the prisoner's counsel sat down, there went a rustle and a buzz through the court, and a communication of looks and whispers, that seemed to denote that there were hopes of his acquittal—yet, if such hopes there were, they were deadened by the recollection of the calm, clear, logical address to the jury by the counsel for the crown, and destroyed by the judge's charge, which amounted almost to a demonstration of guilt, and concluded with a confession due to his oath and conscience, that he saw not how the jury could do their duty to their Creator and their fellow-creatures, but by returning *one* verdict. They retired to consider it; and, during a deathlike silence, all eyes were bent on a deathlike Image.

It had appeared in evidence, that the murder had been committed, at least all the gashes inflicted—for there were also finger-marks of strangulation—with a bill-hook, such as foresters use in lopping trees; and several witnesses swore that the bill-hook which was shown them, stained with blood, and with hair sticking on the haft—belonged to Ludovic Adamson. It was also given in evidence—though some doubts rested on the nature of the precise words—that on that day, in the room with the corpse, he had given a wild and incoherent denial to the question then put to him in the din, "What he had done with the bill-hook?" Nobody had seen it in his possession since the spring before;

but it had been found, after several weeks' search, in a hag in the moss, in the direction that he would have most probably taken—had he been the murderer—when flying from the spot to the loch where he was seized. The shoes which he had on when taken, fitted the foot-marks on the ground, not far from the place of the murder, but not so perfectly as another pair which were found in the house. But that other pair, it was proved, belonged to the old man; and therefore the correspondence between the footmarks and the prisoner's shoes, though not perfect, was a circumstance of much suspicion. But a far stronger fact, in this part of the evidence, was sworn to against the prisoner. Though there was no blood on his shoes—when apprehended his legs were bare—though that circumstance, strange as it may seem, had never been noticed till he was on the way to prison! His stockings had been next day found lying on the sward, near the shore of the loch, manifestly after having been washed and laid out to dry in the sun. At mention of this circumstance a cold shudder ran through the court; but neither that, nor indeed any other circumstance in the evidence—not even the account of the appearance which the murdered body exhibited when found on the moor, or when afterwards laid on the bed—extorted from the prisoner one groan—one sigh—or touched the imperturbable deathliness of his countenance. It was proved, that when searched—in prison, and not before; for the agitation that reigned over all assembled in the room at Moorside that dreadful day, had confounded even those accus-

tomed to deal with suspected criminals—there were found in his pocket a small French gold watch, and also a gold brooch, which the Ladies of the Castle had given to Margaret Burnside. On these being taken from him, he had said nothing, but looked aghast. A piece of torn and bloody paper, which had been picked up near the body, was sworn to be in his handwriting; and though the meaning of the words—yet legible—was obscure, they seemed to express a request that Margaret would meet him on the moor on that Saturday afternoon she was murdered. The words "Saturday"—"meet me"—"last time"—were not indistinct, and the paper was of the same quality and colour with some found in a drawer in his bed-room at Moorside. It was proved that he had been drinking with some dissolute persons—poachers and the like—in a public-house in a neighbouring parish all Saturday, till well on in the afternoon, when he left them in a state of intoxication—and was then seen running along the hillside in the direction of the moor. Where he passed the night between the Saturday and the Sabbath, he could give no account, except once when unasked, and as if speaking to himself, he was overheard by the jailer to mutter, "Oh! that fatal night—that fatal night!" And then, when suddenly interrogated, "Where were you?" he answered, "Asleep on the hill;" and immediately relapsed into a state of mental abstraction. These were the chief circumstances against him, which his counsel had striven to explain away. That most eloquent person dwelt with affecting earnestness on the wickedness of putting any evil con-

struction on the distracted behaviour of the wretched man when brought without warning upon the sudden sight of the mangled corpse of the beautiful girl, whom all allowed he had most passionately and tenderly loved; and he strove to prove—as he did prove to the conviction of many—that such behaviour was incompatible with such guilt, and almost of itself established his innocence. All that was sworn to *against* him, as having passed in that dreadful room, was in truth *for* him—unless all our knowledge of the best and of the worst of human nature were not, as folly, to be given to the winds. He beseeched the jury, therefore, to look at all the other circumstances that did indeed seem to bear hard upon the prisoner, in the light of his innocence, and not of his guilt, and that they would all fade into nothing. What mattered his possession of the watch and other trinkets? Lovers as they were, might not the unhappy girl have given them to him for temporary keepsakes? Or might he not have taken them from her in some playful mood, or received them—(and the brooch was cracked, and the mainspring of the watch broken, though the glass was whole)—to get them repaired in the town, which he often visited, and she never? Could human credulity for one moment believe, that such a man as the prisoner at the bar had been sworn to be by a host of witnesses—and especially by that witness, who, with such overwhelming solemnity, had declared he loved him as his own son, and would have been proud if Heaven had given him such a son—he who had baptized him, and known him well ever

since a child—that such a man could *rob* the body of her whom he had violated and murdered? If, under the instigation of the devil, he had violated and murdered her, and for a moment were made the hideous supposition, did vast hell hold that demon whose voice would have tempted the violator and murderer—suppose him both—yea, that man at the bar—sworn to by all the parish, if need were, as a man of tenderest charities, and generosity unbounded—in the lust of lucre, consequent on the satiating of another lust—to rob his victim of a few trinkets! Let loose the wildest imagination into the realms of wildest wickedness, and yet they dared not, as they feared God, to credit for a moment the union of such appalling and such paltry guilt, *in that man* who now trembled not before them, but who seemed cut off from all the sensibilities of this life by the scythe of Misery that had shorn him down! But why try to recount, however feebly, the line of defence taken by the speaker, who on that day seemed all but inspired. The sea may overturn rocks, or fire consume them till they split in pieces; but a crisis there sometimes is in man's destiny, which all the powers ever lodged in the lips of man, were they touched with a coal from heaven, cannot avert, and when even he who strives to save, feels and knows that he is striving all in vain—ay, vain as a worm—to arrest the tread of Fate about to trample down its victim into the dust. All hoped—many almost believed—that the prisoner would be acquitted—that a verdict of "Not Proven," at least, if not of "Not Guilty," would be returned; but *they*

had not been sworn to do justice before man and before God—and, if need were, to seal up even the fountains of mercy in their hearts—flowing, and easily set a-flowing, by such a spectacle as that bar presented—a man already seeming to belong unto the dead!

In about a quarter of an hour the jury returned to the box—and the verdict, having been sealed with black wax, was handed up to the Judge, who read, "We unanimously find the prisoner Guilty." He then stood up to receive sentence of death. Not a dry eye was in the court during the Judge's solemn and affecting address to the criminal—except those of the Shadow on whom had been pronounced the doom. "Your body will be hung in chains on the moor—on a gibbet erected on the spot where you murdered the victim of your unhallowed lust, and there will your bones bleach in the sun, and rattle in the wind, after the insects and the birds of the air have devoured your flesh; and in all future times, the spot on which, God-forsaking and God-forsaken, you perpetrated that double crime, at which all humanity shudders, will be looked on from afar by the traveller passing through that lonesome wild with a sacred horror!" Here the voice of the Judge faltered, and he covered his face with his hands; but the prisoner stood unmoved in figure, and in face untroubled—and when all was closed, was removed from the bar, the same ghostlike and unearthly phantom, seemingly unconscious of what had passed, or even of his own existence.

Surely now he will suffer his old father to visit him

in his cell! "Once more only—only once more let me see him before I die!" were his words to the clergyman of the parish, whose Manse he had so often visited when a young and happy boy. That servant of Christ had not forsaken him whom now all the world had forsaken. As free from sin himself as might be mortal and fallen man—mortal because fallen—he knew from Scripture and from nature, that in "the lowest deep there is still a lower deep" in wickedness, into which all of woman born may fall, unless held back by the arm of the Almighty Being, whom they must serve steadfastly in holiness and truth. He knew, too, from the same source, that man cannot sin beyond the reach of God's mercy—if the worst of all imaginable sinners seek, in a Bible-breathed spirit at last, that mercy through the Atonement of the Redeemer. Daily—and nightly—he visited that cell; nor did he fear to touch the hand—now wasted to the bone—which, at the temptation of the Prince of the Air, who is mysteriously suffered to enter in at the gates of every human heart that is guarded not by the flaming sword of God's own Seraphim—was lately drenched in the blood of the most innocent creature that ever looked on the day. Yet a sore trial it was to his Christianity to find the criminal so obdurate. He would make no confession. Yet said that it was fit—that it was far best he should die—that he deserved death! But ever when the deed without a name was alluded to, his tongue was tied; and once in the midst of an impassioned prayer, beseeching him to listen to conscience and confess—he that prayed

shuddered to behold him frown, and to hear bursting out in terrible energy, "Cease—cease to torment me, or you will drive me to deny my God!"

No father came to visit him in his cell. On the day of trial he had been missing from Moorside, and was seen next morning—(where he had been all night never was known—though it was afterwards rumoured that one like him had been seen sitting, as the gloaming darkened, on the very spot of the murder)—wandering about the hills, hither and thither, and round and round about, like a man stricken with blindness, and vainly seeking to find his home. When brought into the house, his senses were gone, and he had lost the power of speech. All he could do was to mutter some disjointed syllables, which he did continually, without one moment's cessation, one unintelligible and most rueful moan! The figure of his daughter seemed to cast no image on his eyes—blind and dumb he sat where he had been placed, perpetually wringing his hands, with his shaggy eyebrows drawn high up his forehead, and the fixed orbs—though stone-blind at least to all real things—beneath them flashing fire. He had borne up bravely—almost to the last—but had some tongue syllabled his son's doom in the solitude, and at that instant had insanity smitten him?

Such utter prostration of intellect had been expected by none; for the old man, up to the very night before the Trial, had expressed the most confident trust of his son's acquittal. Nothing had ever served to shake his conviction of his innocence—though he had always for-

borne speaking about the circumstances of the murder—and had communicated to nobody any of the grounds on which he more than hoped in a case so hopeless; and though a trouble in his eyes often gave the lie to his lips, when he used to say to the silent neighbours, "We shall soon see him back at Moorside." Had his belief in his Ludovic's innocence, and his trust in God that that innocence would be established and set free, been so sacred, that the blow, when it did come, struck him like a hammer, and felled him to the ground, from which he had risen with a riven brain? In whatever way the shock had been given, it had been terrible; for old Gilbert Adamson was now a confirmed lunatic, and keepers were in Moorside—not keepers from a mad-house—for his daughter could not afford such tendence—but two of her brother's friends, who sat up with him alternately, night and day, while the arms of the old man, in his distraction, had to be bound with cords. That dreadful moaning was at an end now; but the echoes of the hills responded to his yells and shrieks; and people were afraid to go near the house. It was proposed among the neighbours to take Alice and little Ann out of it; and an asylum for them was in the Manse; but Alice would not stir at all their entreaties; and as, in such a case, it would have been too shocking to tear her away by violence, she was suffered to remain with him who knew her not, but who often—it was said—stared distractedly upon her, as if she had been some fiend sent in upon his insanity from the place of punishment. Weeks passed on, and still

she was there—hiding herself at times from those terrifying eyes; and from her watching corner, waiting from morn till night, and from night till morn—for she seldom lay down to sleep, and had never undressed herself since that fatal sentence—for some moment of exhausted horror, when she might steal out, and carry some slight gleam of comfort, however evanescent, to the glimmer or the gloom in which the brain of her Father swam through a dream of blood. But there were no lucid intervals; and ever as she moved towards him, like a pitying angel, did he furiously rage against her, as if she had been a fiend. At last, she who, though yet so young, had lived to see the murdered corpse of her dearest friend—murdered by her own only brother, whom, in secret, that murdered maiden had most tenderly loved—that murderous brother loaded with prison-chains, and condemned to the gibbet for inexpiable and unpardonable crimes—her father raving like a demon, self-murderous were his hands but free, nor visited by one glimpse of mercy from Him who rules the skies—after having borne more than, as she meekly said, had ever poor girl borne, she took to her bed quite heart-broken, and, the night before the day of execution, died. As for poor little Ann, she had been wiled away some weeks before; and in the blessed thoughtlessness of childhood, was not without hours of happiness among her playmates on the braes.

The Morning of that Day arose, and the Moor was all blackened with people round the tall gibbet, that seemed to have grown, with its horrid arms, out of the ground during the night. No sound of axes or ham-

mers had been heard clinking during the dark hours—nothing had been seen passing along the road; for the windows of all the houses from which any thing could have been seen, had been shut fast against all horrid sights—and the horses' hoofs and the wheels must have been muffled that had brought that hideous Framework to the Moor. But there it now stood—a dreadful Tree! The sun moved higher and higher up the sky, and all the eyes of that congregation were at once turned towards the east, for a dull sound, as of rumbling wheels and trampling feet, seemed shaking the Moor in that direction; and lo! surrounded with armed men on horseback, and environed with halberds, came on a cart, in which three persons seemed to be sitting, he in the middle all dressed in white—the death-clothes of the murderer—the unpitying shedder of most innocent blood.

There was no bell to toll there—but at the very moment he was ascending the scaffold, a black cloud knelled thunder, and many hundreds of people all at once fell down upon their knees. The man in white lifted up his eyes, and said, "O Lord God of Heaven! and Thou his blessed Son, who died to save sinners! accept this sacrifice!"

Not one in all that immense crowd could have known that that white apparition was Ludovic Adamson. His hair, that had been almost jet-black, was now white as his face—as his figure, dressed, as it seemed, for the grave. Are they going to execute the murderer in his shroud? Stone-blind, and stone-deaf, there he stood—

yet had he, without help, walked up the steps of the scaffold. A hymn of several voices arose—the man of God close beside the criminal, with the Bible in his uplifted hands; but those bloodless lips had no motion—with him this world was not, though yet he was in life—in life, and no more! And was this the man who, a few months ago, flinging the fear of death from him, as a flash of sunshine flings aside the shades, had descended into that pit which an hour before had been bellowing, as the foul vapours exploded like cannons, and brought up the bodies of them who had perished in the womb of the earth? Was this he who once leapt into the devouring fire, and re-appeared, after all had given over for lost the glorious boy, with an infant in his arms, while the flames seemed to eddy back, that they might scathe not the head of the deliverer, and a shower of blessings fell upon him as he laid it in its mother's bosom, and made the heart of the widow to sing for joy? It is he. And now the executioner pulls down the cord from the beam, and fastens it round the criminal's neck. His face is already covered, and that fatal handkerchief is in his hand. The whole crowd are now kneeling, and one multitudinous sob convulses the air;—when wild outcries, and shrieks, and yells, are at that moment heard from the distant gloom of the glen that opens up to Moorside, and three figures, one far in advance of the others, come flying, as on the wings of the wind, towards the gibbet. Hundreds started to their feet, and "'Tis the maniac—'tis the lunatic!" was the cry. Precipitating himself down a rocky hillside, that seemed

hardly accessible but to the goats, the maniac, the lunatic, at a few desperate leaps and bounds, just as it was expected he would have been dashed in pieces, alighted unstunned upon the level greensward; and now, far ahead of his keepers, with incredible swiftness neared the scaffold—and, the dense crowd making a lane for him in their fear and astonishment, he flew up the ladder to the horrid platform, and, grasping his son in his arms, howled dreadfully over him; and then with a loud voice cried, "Saved—saved—saved!"

So sudden had been that wild rush, that all the officers of justice—the very executioner—stood aghast; and now the prisoner's neck is free from that accursed cord—his face is once more visible without that hideous shroud—and he sinks down senseless on the scaffold. "Seize him—seize him!" and he was seized—but no maniac—no lunatic was the father now—for during the night, and during the dawn, and during the morn, and on to midday—on to the HOUR OF ONE—when all rueful preparations were to be completed—had Providence been clearing and calming the tumult in that troubled brain; and as the cottage clock struck ONE, memory brightened at the chime into a perfect knowledge of the past, and prophetic imagination saw the future lowering upon the dismal present. All night long, with the cunning of a madman—for all night long he had still been mad—the miserable old man had been disengaging his hands from the manacles, and that done, springing like a wild beast from his cage, he flew out of the open door, nor could a horse's speed on that

fearful road have overtaken him before he reached the scaffold.

No need was there to hold the miserable man. He who had been so furious in his manacles at Moorside, seemed now, to the people at a distance, calm as when he used to sit in the elder's seat beneath the pulpit in that small kirk. But they who were on or near the scaffold, saw something horrid in the fixedness of his countenance. "Let go your hold of me, ye fools!" he muttered to some of the mean wretches of the law, who still had him in their clutch—and tossing his hands on high, cried with a loud voice, "Give ear, ye Heavens! and hear, O Earth! I am the Violator—I am the Murderer!"

The moor groaned as in earthquake—and then all that congregation bowed their heads with a rustling noise, like a wood smitten by the wind. Had they heard aright the unimaginable confession? His head had long been grey—he had reached the term allotted to man's mortal life here below—threescore and ten. Morning and evening, never had the Bible been out of his hands at the hour set apart for family worship. And who so eloquent as he in expounding its most dreadful mysteries? The unregenerate heart of man, he had ever said—in scriptural phrase—was "desperately wicked." Desperately wicked indeed! And now again he tossed his arms wrathfully—so the wild motion looked—in the wrathful skies. "I ravished—I murdered her—ye know it, ye evil spirits in the depths of hell!" Consternation now fell on the minds of all—

and the truth was clear as light—and all eyes knew at once that now indeed they looked on the murderer. The dreadful delusion under which all their understandings had been brought by the power of circumstances, was by that voice destroyed—the obduracy of him who had been about to die was now seen to have been the most heroic virtue—the self-sacrifice of a son to save a father from ignominy and death.

"O monster, beyond the reach of redemption! and the very day after the murder, while the corpse was lying in blood on the Moor, he was with us in the House of God! Tear him in pieces—rend him limb from limb—tear him into a thousand pieces!"—"The Evil One had power given him to prevail against me, and I fell under the temptation. It was so written in the Book of Predestination, and the deed lies at the door of God!"—"Tear the blasphemer into pieces! Let the scaffold drink his blood!"—"So let it be, if it be so written, good people! Satan never left me since the murder till this day—he sat by my side in the kirk—when I was ploughing in the field—there—ever as I came back from the other end of the furrow—he stood on the head-rig—in the shape of a black shadow. But now I see him not—he has returned to his den in the pit. I cannot imagine what I have been doing, or what has been done to me, all the time between the day of trial and this of execution. Was I mad? No matter. But you shall not hang Ludovic—he, poor boy, is innocent;—here, look at him—here—I tell you again—is the Violator and the Murderer!"

But shall the men in authority dare to stay the execution at a maniac's words? If they dare not—that multitude will, now all rising together like the waves of the sea. "Cut the cords asunder that bind our Ludovic's arms"—a thousand voices cried; and the murderer, unclasping a knife, that, all unknown to his keepers, he had worn in his breast when a maniac, sheared them asunder as the sickle shears the corn. But his son stirred not—and on being lifted up by his father, gave not so much as a groan. His heart had burst—and he was dead. No one touched the grey-headed murderer, who knelt down—not to pray—but to look into his son's eyes—and to examine his lips—and to feel his left breast—and to search out all the symptoms of a fainting-fit, or to assure himself—and many a corpse had the plunderer handled on the field after hush of the noise of battle—that this was death. He rose; and standing forward on the edge of the scaffold, said, with a voice that shook not, deep, strong, hollow, and hoarse—"Good people! I am *likewise* now the murderer of my daughter and of my son! and of myself!" Next moment, the knife was in his heart—and he fell down a corpse on the corpse of his Ludovic. All round the sultry horizon the black clouds had for hours been gathering—and now came the thunder and the lightning—and the storm. Again the whole multitude prostrated themselves on the moor—and the Pastor, bending over the dead bodies, said,

"THIS IS EXPIATION!"

MORNING MONOLOGUE.

"KNOWLEDGE is Power." So is Talent—so is Genius—so is Virtue. Which is the greatest? It might seem hard to tell; but united, they go forth conquering and to conquer. Nor is that union rare. Kindred in nature, they love to dwell together in the same "palace of the soul." Remember Milton. But too often they are disunited; and then, though still Powers, they are but feeble, and their defeats are frequent as their triumphs. What! is it so even with Virtue? It is, and it is not. Virtue may reign without the support of Talent and Genius; but her counsellor is Conscience, and what is Conscience but Reason rich by birthright in knowledge directly derived from the heaven of heavens beyond all the stars?

And may Genius and Talent indeed be, conceive, and execute, without the support of Virtue? You will find that question answered in the following lines by Charles Grant, which deserve the name of philosophical poetry:—

> Talents, 'tis true, quick, various, bright, has God
> To Virtue oft denied, on Vice bestow'd;

Just as fond Nature lovelier colours brings
To deck the insect's than the eagle's wings.
But then of man the high-born nobler part,
The ethereal energies that touch the heart,
Creative Fancy, labouring Thought intense,
Imagination's wild magnificence,
And all the dread sublimities of Song—
These, Virtue! these, to thee alone belong.

Such is the natural constitution of humanity; and in the happiest state of social life, all its noblest Faculties would bear legitimate sway, each in its own province, within the spirit's ample domains. There, Genius would be honoured; and Poetry another name for religion. But to such a state there can, under the most favouring skies, be no more than an approximation; and the time never was when Virtue suffered no persecution, Honour no shame, Genius no neglect, nor fetters were not imposed by tyrannous power on the feet of the free. The age of Homer, the age of Solon, the age of Pericles, the age of Numa, the age of Augustus, the age of Alfred, the age of Leo, the age of Elizabeth, the age of Anne, the age of Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron, have they not been all bright and great ages? Yet had they been faithfully chronicled, over the misery and madness of how many despairing spirits fraught with heavenly fire, might we not have been called to pour forth our unavailing indignations and griefs!

Under despotic governments, again, such as have sunk deep their roots into Oriental soils, and beneath Oriental skies prosperously expanded their long-enduring umbrage, where might is right, and submission virtue, noble-

minded men—for sake of that peace which is ever dearest to the human heart, and if it descend not a glad and gracious gift from Heaven, will yet not ungratefully be accepted when breathed somewhat sadly from the quieted bosom of earth by tyranny saved from trouble—have submitted, almost without mourning, to sing "many a lovely lay," that perished like the flowers around them, in praise of the Power at whose footstool they "stooped their anointed heads as low as death." Even then has Genius been honoured, because though it ceased to be august, still it was beautiful; it seemed to change fetters of iron into bands of roses, and to halo with a glory the brows of slaves. The wine-cup mantled in its light; and Love forgot in the bower Poetry built for bliss, that the bride might be torn from the bridegroom's bosom on her bridal night by a tyrant's lust. Even there Genius was happy, and diffused happiness; at its bidding was heard pipe, tabor, and dulcimer; and to its lips "warbling melody" life floated by, in the midst of all oppression, a not undelightful dream!

But how has it been with us in our Green Island of the West? Some people are afraid of revolutions. Heaven pity them! we have had a hundred since the Roman bridged our rivers, and led his highways over our mountains. And what the worse have we been of being thus revolved? We are no radicals; but we dearly love a revolution—like that of the stars. No two nights are the heavens the same—all the luminaries are revolving to the music of their own spheres—look, we beseech you, on that new-risen star. He is elected by universal

suffrage—a glorious representative of a million lesser lights; and on dissolution of *that* Parliament—how silent but how eloquent!—he is sure of his return. Why, we should dearly love the late revolution we have seen below—it is no longer called Reform—were it to fling up to free light from fettered darkness a few fine bold original spirits, who might give the whole world a new character, and a more majestic aspect to crouching life. But we look abroad and see strutting to and fro the sons of little men blown up with vanity, in a land where tradition not yet old tells of a race of giants. We are ashamed of ourselves to think we feared the throes of the times, seeing not portentous but pitiable births. Brush these away; and let us think of the great dead—let us look on the great living—and, strong in memory and hope, be confident in the cause of Freedom. "Great men *have been* among us—better none;" and can it be said that *now* there is "a want of books and men," or that those we have, are mere dwarfs and duodecimos? Is there no energy, no spirit of adventure and enterprise, no passion in the character of our country? Has not wide over earth

> "England sent her men, of men the chief,
> To plant the Tree of Life, to plant fair Freedom's Tree?"

Has not she, the Heart of Europe and the Queen, kindled America into life, and raised up in the New World a power to balance the Old, star steadying star in their unconflicting courses? You can scarce see her shores for ships; her inland groves are crested with towers and temples; and mists brooding at intervals over her far-

extended plains, tell of towns and cities, their hum unheard by the gazer from her glorious hills. Of such a land it would need a gifted eye to look into all that is passing within the mighty heart; but it needs no gifted eye, no gifted ear, to see and hear there the glare and the groaning of great anguish, as of lurid breakers tumbling in and out of the caves of the sea. But is it or is it not a land where all the faculties of the soul are free as they ever were since the Fall? Grant that there are tremendous abuses in all departments of public and private life; that rulers and legislators have often been as deaf to the "still small voice" as to the cry of the million; that they whom they have ruled, and for whom they have legislated often so unwisely or wickedly, have been as often untrue to themselves, and in self-imposed idolatry

> "Have bow'd their knees
> To despicable gods;"

Yet base, blind and deaf (and better dumb) must be he who would deny, that here Genius has had, and now has her noblest triumphs; that Poetry has here kindled purer fires on loftier altars than ever sent up their incense to Grecian skies; that Philosophy has sounded depths in which her torch was not extinguished, but, though bright, could pierce not the "heart of the mystery" into which it sent some strong illuminations; that Virtue here has had chosen champions victorious in their martyrdom; and Religion her ministers and her servants not unworthy of her whose title is from heaven.

Causes there have been, are, and ever will be, why

often, even here, the very highest faculties "rot in cold obstruction." But in all the ordinary affairs of life, have not the best the best chance to win the day? Who, in general, achieve competence, wealth, splendour, magnificence, in their condition as citizens? The feeble, the ignorant, and the base, or the strong, the instructed, and the bold? Would you, at the offstart, back mediocrity with alien influence, against high talent with none but its own—the native "might that slumbers in a peasant's arm," or, nobler far, that which neither sleeps nor slumbers in a peasant's heart? There is something abhorrent from every sentiment in man's breast to see, as we too often do, imbecility advanced to high places by the mere accident of high birth. But how our hearts warm within us to behold the base-born, if in Britain we may use the word, by virtue of their own irresistible energies, taking precedence, rightful and gladly-granted, of the blood of kings! Yet we have heard it whispered, insinuated, surmised, spoken, vociferated, howled, and roared in a voice of small-beer-souring thunder, that Church and State, Army and Navy, are all officered by the influence of the Back-stairs—that few or none but blockheads, by means of brass only, mount from the Bar which they have disturbed to that Bench which they disgrace; and that mankind intrust the cure of all diseases their flesh is heir to, to the exclusive care of every here and there a handful of old women.

Whether overstocked or not, 'twould be hard to say, but all professions are full—from that of Peer to that of Beggar. To live is the most many of us can do. Why

then complain? Men should not complain when it is their duty as men to work. Silence need not be sullen —but better sullenness than all this outrageous outcry, as if words the winds scatter, were to drop into the soil and grow up grain. Processions! is this a time for full-grown men in holyday shows to play the part of children? If they desire advancement, let them, like their betters, turn to and work. All men worth mentioning in this country belong to the working classes. What seated Thurlow, and Wedderburne, and Scott, and Erskine, and Copley, and Brougham on the woolsack? Work. What made Wellington? For seven years war all over Spain, and finally at Waterloo—work—bloody and glorious work.

Yet still the patriot cry is of sinecures. Let the few sluggards that possess but cannot enjoy them, doze away on them till sinecures and sinecurists drop into the dust. Shall such creatures disturb the equanimity of the magnanimous working-classes of England? True to themselves in life's great relations, they need not grudge, for a little while longer, the paupers a few paltry pence out of their earnings; for they know a sure and silent death-blow has been struck against that order of things by the sense of the land, and that all who receive wages must henceforth give work. All along that has been the rule—these are the exceptions; or say, that has been the law—these are its revolutions. Let there be high rewards, and none grudge them—in honour and gold—for high work. And men of high talents—never extinct—will reach up their hands and seize them, amidst the

acclamations of a people who have ever taken pride in a great ambition. If the competition is to be in future more open than ever, to know it is so will rejoice the souls of all who are not slaves. But clear the course! Let not the crowd rush in—for by doing so, they will bring down the racers, and be themselves trampled to death.

Now we say that the race is—if not always—ninety-nine times in a hundred—to the swift, and the battle to the strong. We may have been fortunate in our naval and military friends; but we cannot charge our memory with a single consummate ass holding a distinguished rank in either service. That such consummate asses are in both, we have been credibly informed, and believe it; and we have sometimes almost imagined that we heard their bray at no great distance, and the flapping of their ears. Poor creatures enough do rise by seniority or purchase, or if any body know how else, we do not; and such will be the case to the end of the chapter of human accidents. But merit not only makes the man, but the officer on shore and at sea. They are as noble and discontented a set of fellows all, as ever boarded or stormed; and they will continue so, not till some change in the Admiralty, or at the Horseguards, for Sir James Grahame does his duty, and so does Lord Hill; but till a change in humanity, for 'tis no more than Adam did, and we attribute whatever may be amiss or awry, chiefly to the Fall. Let the radicals set poor human nature on her legs again, and what would become of *them*? In the French service there is no rising at all, it seems, but by merit; but there is

also much running away; not in a disgraceful style, for our natural enemies, and artificial friends, are a brave race, but in mere indignation and disgust to see troops so shamefully ill-officered as ours, which it would be a disgrace to look in the face on the field, either in column or line. Therefore they never stand a charge, but are off in legions of honour, eagles and all, before troops that have been so uniformly flogged from time immemorial, as to have no other name but raw lobsters, led on by officers all shivering or benumbed under the "cold shade of aristocracy," like Picton and Pack.

We once thought of going ourselves to the English Bar, but were dissuaded from doing so by some judicious friends, who assured us we should only be throwing away our great talents and unexampled eloquence; for that success depended solely on interest, and we had none we knew of, either in high places or in low, and had then never seen an attorney. We wept for the fate of many dear friends in wigs, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On our return from Palestine and other foreign parts, behold them all bending under briefs, bound by retaining fees, or like game-hawks, wheeling in airy circuits over the rural provinces, and pouncing down on their prey, away to their eyries with talon-fulls, which they devoured at their luxurious leisure, untroubled by any callow young! They now compose the Bench.

Ere we set off for Salem, we had thoughts of entering the Church, and of becoming Bishops. But 'twas necessary, we were told, first to be tutor to a lord. That, in our pride, we could not stomach; but if ours had not

been the sin by which Satan fell, where now had been the excellent Howley? All our habits in youth led us to associate much with intending divines. A few of them are still curates; but 'twere vain to try to count the vicars, rectors, canons, deans, archdeacons, and bishops, with whom, when we were all under-graduates together at Oxford, we used to do nothing but read Greek all day, and Latin all night. Yet you hear nothing but abuse of such a Church! and are told to look at the Dissenters. We do look at them, and an uglier set we never saw; not one in a hundred, in his grimness, a gentleman. Not a single scholar have they got to show, and now that Hall is mute, not one orator. Their divinity is of the dust—and their discourses dry bones. Down with the old Universities—up with new. The old are not yet down, but the new are up; and how dazzling the contrast, even to the purblind! You may hew down trees, but not towers; and Granta and Rhedicyna will show their temples to the sun, ages after such structures shall have become hospitals. They enlighten the land. Beloved are they by all the gentlemen of England. Even the plucked think of them with tears of filial reverence, and having renewed their plumage, clap their wings and crow defiance to all their foes. A man, you say, can get there no education to fit him for life. Bah! Tell that to the marines. Now and then one meets a man eminent in a liberal profession, who has not been at any place that could easily be called a College. But the great streams of talent in England keep perpetually flowing from the gates of her glorious Universities—

and he who would deny it in any mixed company of leading men in London, would only have to open his eyes in the hush that rebuked his folly, to see that he was a Cockney, clever enough, perhaps, in his own small way, and the author of some sonnets, but even to his own feelings painfully out of place among men who had not studied at the Surrey.

We cannot say that we have any fears, this fine clear September morning, for the Church of England in England. In Ireland, deserted and betrayed, it has received a dilapidating shock. Fain would seven millions of "the finest people on the earth," and likewise the most infatuated, who are so proud of the verdure of their isle, that they love to make "the green one red," see the entire edifice overthrown, not one stone left upon another, and its very name smothered in a smoky cloud of ascending dust. They have told us so in yells, over which has still been heard "the wolf's long howl," the savage cry of the O'Connell. And Ministers who pretend to be Protestants, and in reform have not yet declared against the Reformation, have tamely yielded, recreants from the truth, to brawlers who would pull down her holiest altars, and given up "pure religion, breathing household laws," a sacrifice to superstition. But there is a power enshrined in England which no Government dare seek to desecrate—in the hearts of the good and wise, grateful to an establishment that has guarded Christianity from corruption, and is venerated by all the most enlightened spirits who conscientiously worship without its pale, and know that in the peaceful

shadow of its strength repose their own humbler and untroubled altars.

We have been taking a cheerful—a hopeful view of our surrounding world, as it is inclosed within these our seas, whose ideal murmur seemed awhile to breathe in unison with our Monologue. We have been believing, that in this our native land, the road of merit is the road to success—say happiness. And is not the law the same in the world of Literature and the Fine Arts? Give a great genius any thing like fair play, and he will gain glory, nay bread. True, he may be before his age, and may have to create his worshippers. But how few such! And is it a disgrace to an age to produce a genius whose grandeur it cannot all at once comprehend? The works of genius are surely not often incomprehensible to the highest contemporary minds, and if they win their admiration, pity not the poor Poet. But pray syllable the living Poet's name who has had reason to complain of having fallen on evil days, or who is with "darkness and with danger compassed round." From humblest birth-places in the obscurest nooks frequently have we seen

> "The fulgent head
> Star-bright appear;"

from unsuspected rest among the water-lilies of the mountain-mere, the snow-white swan in full plumage soar into the sky. Hush! no nonsense about Wordsworth. "Far-off his coming shone;" and what if for a while men knew not whether 'twas some mirage-glimmer, or the dawning of a new "orb of song!"

We have heard rather too much even from that great poet about the deafness and blindness of the present time. No Time but the future, he avers, has ears or eyes for divine music and light. Was Homer in his own day obscure, or Shakspeare? But Heaven forbid we should force the bard into an argument; we allow him to sit undisturbed by us in the bower nature delighted to build for him, with small help from his own hands, at the dim end of that alley green, among lake-murmur and mountain-shadow, for ever haunted by ennobling visions. But we love and respect present Time—partly, we confess, because he has shown some little kindly feeling for ourselves, whereas we fear Future Time may forget us among many others of his worthy father's friends, and the name of Christopher North

> "Die on his ears a faint unheeded sound."

But Present Time has not been unjust to William Wordsworth. Some small temporalities were so; imps running about the feet of Present Time, and sometimes making him stumble: but on raising his eyes from the ground, he saw something shining like an Apparition on the mountain top, and he hailed, and with a friendly voice, the advent of another true Poet of nature and of man.

We must know how to read that prophet, before we preach from any text in his book of revelations.

> "We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
> But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness."

Why spoke he *thus*? Because a deep darkness had fallen upon him all alone in a mountain-cave, and he quaked before the mystery of man's troubled life.

" He thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride;
Of him who walk'd in glory and in joy,
Following his plough upon the mountain side;"

and if they died miserably, " How may I perish!" But they wanted wisdom. Therefore the marvellous boy drank one bowl drugged with sudden, and the glorious ploughman many bowls drugged with lingering death. If we must weep over the woes of Genius, let us know for whom we may rightly shed our tears. With one drop of ink you may write the names of all

" The mighty Poets in their misery dead."

Wordsworth wrote those lines, as we said, in the inspiration of a profound but not permanent melancholy; and they must not be profaned by being used as a quotation in defence of accusations against human society, which, in some lips, become accusations against Providence. The mighty Poets have been not only wiser, but happier than they knew; and what glory from heaven and earth was poured over their inward life, up to the very moment it darkened away into the gloom of the grave!

Many a sad and serious hour have we read D'Israeli, and many a lesson may all lovers of literature learn from his well-instructed books. But from the unhappy stories therein so feelingly and eloquently narrated, has many " a famous ape" drawn conclusions the very reverse of those which he himself leaves to be drawn by all minds possessed of any philosophy. Melancholy the moral of these moving tales; but we must look for it, not into the society that surrounds us, though on it too

we must keep a watchful, and, in spite of all its sins, a not irreverent eye, but into our own hearts. There lies the source of evil which some evil power perhaps without us stirs up till it wells over in misery. Then fiercely turns the wretch first against "the world and the world's law," both sometimes iniquitous, and last of all against the rebellious spirit in his own breast, but for whose own innate corruption his moral being would have been victorious against all outward assaults, violent or insidious, "and to the end persisting safe arrived."

Many men of genius have died without their fame, and for their fate we may surely mourn, without calumniating our kind. It was their lot to die. Such was the will of God. Many such have come and gone, ere they knew themselves what they were; their brothers and sisters and friends knew it not; knew it not their fathers and their mothers; nor the village maidens on whose bosoms they laid their dying heads. Many, conscious of the divine flame, and visited by mysterious stirrings that would not let them rest, have like vernal wild-flowers withered, or been cut down like young trees in the season of leaf and blossom. Of this our mortal life what are these but beautiful evanishings! Such was our young Scottish Poet, Michael Bruce—a fine scholar, who taught a little wayside school, and died, a mere lad, of consumption. Loch Leven Castle, where Mary Stuart was imprisoned, looks not more melancholy among the dim waters for her than for its own Poet's sake! The linnet, in its joy among the yellow broom, sings not more sweetly than did he in his sadness, sitting beside

his unopened grave, "one song that will not die," though the dirge but draw now and then a tear from some simple heart.

"Now spring returns—but not to me returns
The vernal joy my better years have known;
Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,
And all the joys of life with health are flown."

To young Genius to die is often a great gain. The green leaf was almost hidden in blossoms, and the tree put forth beautiful promise. Cold winds blew, and clouds intercepted the sunshine; but it felt the dews of heaven, and kept flourishing fair even in the moonlight, deriving sweet sustenance from the stars. But would all those blossoms have been fruit? Many would have formed, but more perhaps dropt in unperceived decay, and the tree which "all eyes that looked on loved," might not have been the pride of the garden. Death could not permit the chance of such disappointment, stepped kindly in, and left the spring-dream "sweet but mournful to the soul," among its half-fancied memories. Such was the fate, perhaps, of Henry Kirke White. His fine moral and intellectual being was not left to pine away neglected; and if, in gratitude and ambition, twin-births in that noble heart, he laid down his life for sake of the lore he loved, let us lament the dead with no passionate ejaculations over injustice by none committed, console ourselves with the thought, in noways unkind to his merits, that he died in a mild bright spring that might have been succeeded by no very glorious summer; and that, fading away as he did among the tears of the good and great, his memory has been em-

balmed, not only in his own gentle inspirations, but in the immortal eulogy of Southey. But, alas! many thus endowed by nature "have waged with fortune an unequal war;" and pining away in poverty and disappointment, have died broken-hearted—and been buried—some in unhonoured—some even in unwept graves! And how many have had a far more dismal lot, because their life was not so innocent! The children of misfortune, but of error too—of frailty, vice, and sin. Once gone astray, with much to tempt them on, and no voice, no hand, to draw them back, theirs has been at first a flowery descent to death, but soon sorely beset with thorns, lacerating the friendless wretches, till, with shame and remorse their sole attendants, they have tottered into uncoffined holes and found peace.

With sorrows and sufferings like these, it would be hardly fair to blame society at large for having little or no sympathy; for they are, in the most affecting cases, borne in silence, and are unknown even to the generous and humane in their own neighbourhood, who might have done something or much to afford encouragement or relief. Nor has Charity always neglected those who so well deserved her open hand, and in their virtuous poverty might, without abatement of honourable pride in themselves, have accepted silent succour to silent distress. Pity that her blessings should be so often intercepted by worthless applicants, on their way, it may be said, to the magnanimous who have not applied at all, but spoken to her heart in a silent language, which was not meant even to express the penury it be-

trayed. But we shall never believe that dew twice blessed seldom descends, in such a land as ours, on the noble young head that else had sunk like a chance flower in some dank shade, left to wither among weeds. We almost venture to say, that much of such unpitied, because often unsuspected suffering, cannot cease to be without a change in the moral government of the world.

Nor has Genius a right to claim from Conscience what is due but to Virtue. None who love humanity can wish to speak harshly of its mere frailties or errors—but none who revere morality can allow privilege to its sins. All who sin suffer, with or without genius; and we are nowhere taught in the New Testament, that remorse in its agony, and penitence in its sorrow, visit men's imaginations only; but whatever way they enter, their rueful dwelling is in the heart. Poets shed no bitterer tears than ordinary men; and Fonblanque finely showed us, in one of his late little essays, clear as wells and deep as tarns, that so far from there being any thing in the constitution of genius naturally kindred either to vice or misery, it is framed of light and love and happiness, and that its sins and sufferings come not from the spirit but from the flesh. Yet is its flesh as firm, and perhaps somewhat finer than that of the common clay; but still it is clay—for all men are dust.

But what if they who, on the ground of genius, claim exemption from our blame, and inclusion within our sympathies, even when seen suffering from their own sins, have no genius at all, but are mere ordinary men,

and but for the fumes of some physical excitement, which they mistake for the airs of inspiration, are absolutely stupider than people generally go, and even without any tolerable abilities for alphabetical education? Many such run versifying about, and will not try to settle down into any easy sedentary trade, till getting thirsty through perpetual perspiration, they take to drinking, come to you with subscription-papers for poetry, with a cock in their eye that tells of low tippling-houses, and, accepting your half-crown, slander you when melting it in the purling purlieus of their own donkey-browsed Parnassus.

Can this age be fairly charged—we speak of England and Scotland—with a shameful indifference—or worse—a cruel scorn—or worse still—a barbarous persecution of young persons of humble birth, in whom there may appear a promise of talent, or of genius? Many are the scholars in whom their early benefactors have had reason to be proud of themselves, while they have been happy to send their sons to be instructed in the noblest lore, by men whose boyhood they had rescued from the darkness of despair, and clothed it with the warmth and light of hope. And were we to speak of endowments in schools and colleges, in which so many fine scholars have been brought up from among the humbler classes, who but for them had been bred to some mean handicraft, we should show better reason still for believing that moral and intellectual worth is not overlooked, or left to pine neglected in obscure places, as it is too much the fashion with a certain set

of discontented declaimers to give out; but that in no other country has such provision been made for the meritorious children of the enlightened poor as in England. But we fear that the talent and the genius which, according to them, have been so often left or sent to beggary, to the great reproach even of our national character, have not been of a kind which a thoughtful humanity would in its benefactions have recognised; for it looks not with very hopeful eyes on mere irregular sallies of fancy, least of all when spurning prudence and propriety, and symptomatic of a mental constitution easily excited, but averse to labour, and insensible to the delight labour brings with it, when the faculties are all devoted in steadfastness of purpose to the acquisition of knowledge and the attainment of truth.

'Tis not easy to know, seeing it is so difficult to define it, whether this or that youth who thinks he has genius, has it or not; the only proof he may have given of it is perhaps a few copies of verses, which breathe the animal gladness of young life, and are tinged with tints of the beautiful, which joy itself, more imaginative than it ever again will be, steals from the sunset; but sound sense, and judgment, and taste which is sense and judgment of all finest feelings and thoughts, and the love of light dawning on the intellect, and ability to gather into knowledge facts near and from afar, till the mind sees systems, and in them understands the phenomena which, when looked at singly, perplexed the pleasure of the sight—these, and aptitudes and capacities and powers such as these, are indeed of promise,

and more than promise; they are already performance, and justify in minds thus gifted, and in those who watch their workings, hopes of a wiser and happier future when the boy shall be a man.

Perhaps too much honour, rather than too little, has been shown by this age to mediocre poetry and other works of fiction. A few gleams of genius have given some writers of little worth a considerable reputation; and great waxed the pride of poetasters. But true poetry burst in beauty over the land, and we became intolerant of "false glitter." Fresh sprang its flowers from the "dædal earth," or seemed, they were so surpassingly beautiful, as if spring had indeed descended from heaven, "veiled in a shower of shadowing roses," and no longer could we suffer young gentlemen and ladies, treading among the profusion, to gather the glorious scatterings, and weaving them into fantastic or even tasteful garlands, to present them to us, as if they had been raised from the seed of their own genius, and entitled therefore "to bear their name in the wild woods." This flower-gathering, pretty pastime though it be, and altogether innocent, fell into disrepute; and then all such florists began to complain of being neglected, or despised, or persecuted, and their friends to lament over their fate, the fate of all genius, "in amorous ditties all a summer's day."

Besides the living poets of highest rank, are there not many whose claims to join the sacred band have been allowed, because their lips, too, have sometimes been touched with a fire from heaven? Second-rate indeed!

Ay, well for those who are third, fourth, or fifth-rate—knowing where sit Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton. Round about Parnassus run *many* parallel roads, with forests of "cedar and branching palm" between, overshadowing the sunshine on each magnificent level with a sense of something more sublime still nearer the forked summit; and each band, so that they be not ambitious overmuch, in their own region may wander or repose in grateful bliss. Thousands look up with envy from "the low-lying fields of the beautiful land" immediately without the line that goes wavingly asweep round the base of the holy mountain, separating it from the common earth. What clamour and what din from the excluded crowd! Many are heard there to whom nature has been kind, but they have not yet learned "to know themselves," or they would retire, but not afar off, and in silence adore. And so they do erelong, and are happy in the sight of "the beauty still more beauteous" revealed to their fine perceptions, though to them was not given the faculty that by combining in spiritual passion creates. But what has thither brought the self-deceived, who will not be convinced of their delusion, even were Homer or Milton's very self to frown on them with eyes no longer dim, but angry in their brightness like lowering stars?

But we must beware—perhaps too late—of growing unintelligible, and ask you, in plainer terms, if you do not think that by far the greatest number of all those who raise an outcry against the injustice of the world to men of genius, are persons of the meanest abilities, who have all their lives been foolishly fighting with their stars?

Their demons have not whispered to them "have a taste," but "you have genius," and the world gives the demons the lie. Thence anger, spite, rancour, and envy eat their hearts, and they "rail against the Lord's anointed." They set up idols of clay, and fall down and worship them—or idols of brass, more worthless than clay; or they perversely, and in hatred, not in love, pretend reverence for the Fair and Good, because, forsooth, placed by man's ingratitude too far in the shade, whereas man's pity has, in deep compassion, removed the objects of their love, because of their imperfections not blameless, back in among that veiling shade, that their beauty might still be visible, while their deformities were hidden in "a dim religious light."

Let none of the sons or daughters of genius hearken to such outcry but with contempt—and at all times with suspicion, when they find themselves the objects of such lamentations. The world is not—at least does not wish to be an unkind, ungenerous, and unjust world. Many who think themselves neglected, are far more thought of than they suppose; just as many who imagine the world ringing with their name, are in the world's ears nearly anonymous. Only one edition or two of your poems have sold—but is it not pretty well that five hundred or a thousand copies have been read, or glanced over, or looked at, or skimmed, or skipped, or fondled, or petted, or tossed aside "between malice and true love," by ten times that number of your fellow-creatures, not one of whom ever saw your face; while many millions of men, nearly your equals, and not a few millions your superiors far, have

contentedly dropt into the grave, at the close of a long life, without having once "invoked the Muse," and who would have laughed in your face had you talked to them, even in their greatest glee, about their genius?

There is a glen in the Highlands (dearly beloved Southrons, call on us, on your way through Edinburgh, and we shall delight to instruct you how to walk our mountains) called Glencro—very unlike Glenco. A good road winds up the steep ascent, and at the summit there is a stone seat, on which you read "*Rest and be thankful.*" You do so—and are not a little proud—if pedestrians—of your achievement. Looking up you see cliffs high above your head, (not the Cobbler,) and in the clear sky, as far above them, a balanced bird. You envy him his seemingly motionless wings, and wonder at his air-supporters. Down he darts, or aside he shoots, or right up he soars, and you wish you were an Eagle. You have reached Rest-and-be-thankful, yet rest you will not, and thankful you will not be, and you scorn the mean inscription, which many a worthier wayfarer has blessed, while sitting on that stone he has said, "give us this day our daily bread," eat his crust, and then walked away contented down to Cairndow. Just so has it been with you sitting at your appointed place—pretty high up—on the road to the summit of the Biforked Hill. You look up and see Byron—there "sitting where you may not soar,"—and wish you were a great Poet. But you are no more a great Poet than an Eagle eight feet from wing-tip to wing-tip—and will not rest-and-be-thankful that you are a man and a Christian. Nay, you are more, an author

of no mean repute; and your prose is allowed to be excellent, better far than the best paragraph in this our Morning Monologue. But you are sick of walking, and nothing will satisfy you but to fly. Be contented, as we are, with feet, and weep not for wings; and let us take comfort together from a cheering quotation from the philosophic Gray—

> "For they that creep and they that fly,
> Just end where they began!"

THE FIELD OF FLOWERS.

A MAY-MORNING on Ulswater and the banks of Ulswater—commingled earth and heaven! Spring is many-coloured as Autumn; but now Joy scatters the hues daily brightening into greener life, then Melancholy dropt them daily dimming into yellower death. The fear of Winter then—but now the hope of Summer; and Nature rings with hymns hailing the visible advent of the perfect year. If for a moment the woods are silent, it is but to burst forth anew into louder song. The rain is over and gone—but the showery sky speaks in the streams on a hundred hills; and the wide mountain gloom opens its heart to the sunshine, that on many a dripping precipice burns like fire. Nothing seems inanimate. The very clouds and their shadows look alive—the trees, never dead, are wide-awakened from their sleep—families of flowers are frequenting all the dewy places—old walls are splendid with the light of lichens—and birch-crowned cliffs up among the coves send down their fine fragrance to the Lake on every bolder breath that whitens with breaking wavelets the blue of its breezy bosom. Nor mute the voice of man. The shepherd is

whooping on the hill—the ploughman calling to his team somewhere among the furrows in some small late field, won from the woods; and you hear the laughter and the echoes of the laughter—one sound—of children busied in half-work half-play; for what else in vernal sunshine is the occupation of young rustic life? 'Tis no Arcadia—no golden age. But a lovelier scene—in the midst of all its grandeur—is not in merry and majestic England; nor did the hills of this earth ever circumscribe a pleasanter dwelling for a nobler peasantry, than these Cumbrian ranges of rocks and pastures, where the raven croaks in his own region, unregarded in theirs by the fleecy flocks. How beautiful the Church Tower!

On a knoll not far from the shore, and not high above the water, yet by an especial felicity of place gently commanding all that reach of the Lake with all its ranges of mountains—every single tree, every grove, and all the woods seeming to show or to conceal the scene at the bidding of the Spirit of Beauty—reclined two Figures—the one almost rustic, but venerable in the simplicity of old age—the other no longer young, but still in the prime of life—and though plainly apparelled, with form and bearing such as are pointed out in cities, because belonging to distinguished men. The old man behaved towards him with deference but not humility; and between them too—in many things unlike—it was clear even from their silence that there was Friendship.

A little way off, and sometimes almost running, now up and now down the slopes and hollows, was a girl about eight years old—whether beautiful or not you could not

know, for her face was either half-hidden in golden hair, or when she tossed the tresses from her brow, it was so bright in the sunshine that you saw no features, only a gleam of joy. Now she was chasing the butterflies, not to hurt them, but to get a nearer sight of their delicate gauze wings—the first that had come—she wondered whence—to waver and wanton for a little while in the spring-sunshine, and then, she felt, as wondrously, one and all as by consent, to vanish. And now she stooped as if to pull some little wild-flower, her hand for a moment withheld by a loving sense of its loveliness, but ever and anon adding some new colour to the blended bloom intended to gladden her father's eyes—though the happy child knew full well, and sometimes wept to know, that she herself had his entire heart. Yet gliding, or tripping, or dancing along, she touched not with fairy foot one white clover-flower on which she saw working the silent bee. Her father looked too often sad, and she feared—though what it was, she imagined not even in dreams—that some great misery must have befallen him before they came to live in the glen. And such, too, she had heard from a chance whisper was the belief of their neighbours. But momentary the shadows on the light of childhood! Nor was she insensible to her own beauty, that with the innocence it enshrined combined to make her happy; and first met her own eyes every morning, when most beautiful, awakening from the hushed awe of her prayers. She was clad in russet, like a cottager's child; but her air spoke of finer breeding than may be met with among those mountains—though natural

grace accompanies there many a maiden going with her pitcher to the well—and gentle blood and old flows there in the veins of now humble men—who, but for the decay of families once high, might have lived in halls, now dilapidated; and scarcely distinguished through masses of ivy from the circumjacent rocks!

The child stole close behind her father, and kissing his cheek, said, "Were there ever such lovely flowers seen on Ulswater before, father? I do not believe that they will ever die." And she put them in his breast. Not a smile came to his countenance—no look of love—no faint recognition—no gratitude for the gift which at other times might haply have drawn a tear. She stood abashed in the sternness of his eyes, which, though fixed on her, seemed to see her not; and feeling that her glee was mistimed—for with such gloom she was not unfamiliar—the child felt as if her own happiness had been sin, and, retiring into a glade among the broom, sat down and wept.

"Poor wretch, better far that she never had been born!"

The old man looked on his friend with compassion, but with no surprise; and only said, "God will dry up her tears."

These few simple words, uttered in a solemn voice, but without one tone of reproach, seemed somewhat to calm the other's trouble, who first looking towards the spot where his child was sobbing to herself, though he heard it not, and then looking up to heaven, ejaculated for her sake a broken prayer. He then would have

fain called her to him; but he was ashamed that even she should see him in such a passion of grief—and the old man went to her of his own accord, and bade her, as from her father, again to take her pastime among the flowers. Soon was she dancing in her happiness as before; and, that her father might hear she was obeying him, singing a song.

"For five years every Sabbath have I attended divine service in your chapel—yet dare I not call myself a Christian. I have prayed for faith—nor, wretch that I am, am I an unbeliever. But I fear to fling myself at the foot of the cross. God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The old man opened not his lips; for he felt that there was about to be made some confession. Yet he doubted not that the sufferer had been more sinned against than sinning; for the goodness of the stranger—so called still after five years' residence among the mountains—was known in many a vale—and the Pastor knew that charity covereth a multitude of sins—and even as a moral virtue prepares the heart for heaven. So sacred a thing is solace in this woful world.

"We have walked together, many hundred times, for great part of a day, by ourselves two, over long tracts of uninhabited moors, and yet never once from my lips escaped one word about my fates or fortunes—so frozen was the secret in my heart. Often have I heard the sound of your voice, as if it were that of the idle wind; and often the words I did hear seemed, in the confusion, to have no relation to us, to be strange syllablings

in the wilderness, as from the hauntings of some evil spirit instigating me to self-destruction."

"I saw that your life was oppressed by some perpetual burden; but God darkened not your mind while your heart was disturbed so grievously; and well pleased were we all to think, that in caring so kindly for the griefs of others, you might come at last to forget your own; or if that were impossible, to feel, that with the alleviations of time, and sympathy, and religion, yours was no more than the common lot of sorrow."

They rose—and continued to walk in silence—but not apart—up and down that small silvan enclosure overlooked but by rocks. The child saw her father's distraction—no unusual sight to her; yet on each recurrence as mournful and full of fear as if seen for the first time—and pretended to be playing alone with her face pale in tears.

"That child's mother is not dead. Where she is now I know not—perhaps in a foreign country hiding her guilt and her shame. All say that a lovelier child was never seen than that wretch—God bless her—how beautiful is the poor creature now in her happiness singing over her flowers! Just such another must her mother have been at her age. She is now an outcast—and an adulteress."

The pastor turned away his face, for in the silence he heard groans, and the hollow voice again spoke:—

"Through many dismal days and nights have I striven to forgive her, but never for many hours together have I been enabled to repent my curse. For on my knees I

implored God to curse her—her head—her eyes—her breast—her body—mind, heart, and soul—and that she might go down a loathsome leper to the grave."

"Remember what He said to the woman—'Go, and sin no more!'"

"The words have haunted me all up and down the hills—his words and mine; but mine have always sounded liker justice at last—for my nature was created human—and human are all the passions that pronounced that holy or unholy curse!"

"Yet you would not curse her now—were she lying here at your feet—or if you were standing by her death-bed?"

"Lying here at my feet! Even here—on this very spot—not blasted, but green through all the year—within the shelter of these two rocks—she did lie at my feet in her beauty—and as I thought her innocence—my own happy bride! Hither I brought her to be blest—and blest I was even up to the measure of my misery. This world is hell to me now—but then it was heaven!"

"These awful names are of the mysteries beyond the grave."

"Hear me and judge. She was an orphan; all her father's and mother's relations were dead, but a few who were very poor. I married her, and secured her life against this heartless and wicked world. That child was born—and while it grew like a flower—she left it—and its father—me who loved her beyond light and life, and would have given up both for her sake."

"And have not yet found heart to forgive her—

miserable as she needs must be—seeing she has been a great sinner!"

"Who forgives? The father his profligate son, or disobedient daughter? No; he disinherits his first-born, and suffers him to perish, perhaps by an ignominious death. He leaves his only daughter to drag out her days in penury—a widow with orphans. The world may condemn, but is silent; he goes to church every Sabbath, but no preacher denounces punishment on the unrelenting, the unforgiving parent. Yet how easily might he have taken them both back to his heart, and loved them better than ever! But she poisoned my cup of life when it seemed to overflow with heaven. Had God dashed it from my lips, I could have borne my doom. But with her own hand which I had clasped at the altar—and with our Lucy at her knees—she gave me that loathsome draught of shame and sorrow;—I drank it to the dregs—and it is burning all through my being—now—as if it had been hell-fire from the hands of a fiend in the shape of an angel. In what page of the New Testament am I told to forgive her? Let me see the verse—and then shall I know that Christianity is an imposture; for the voice of God within me—the conscience which is his still small voice—commands me never from my memory to obliterate that curse—never to forgive her, and her wickedness—not even if we should see each other's shadows in a future state, after the day of judgment."

His countenance grew ghastly—and staggering to a stone, he sat down and eyed the skies with a vacant

stare, like a man whom dreams carry about in his sleep. His face was like ashes—and he gasped like one about to fall into a fit. "Bring me water"—and the old man motioned on the child, who, giving ear to him for a moment, flew away to the Lake-side with an urn she had brought with her for flowers; and held it to her father's lips. His eyes saw it not;—there was her sweet pale face all wet with tears, almost touching his own—her innocent mouth breathing that pure balm that seems to a father's soul to be inhaled from the bowers of paradise. He took her into his bosom—and kissed her dewy eyes—and begged her to cease her sobbing—to smile—to laugh—to sing—to dance away into the sunshine—*to be happy!* And Lucy afraid, not of her father, but of his kindness—for the simple creature was not able to understand his wild utterance of blessings—returned to the glade but not to her pastime, and couching like a fawn among the fern, kept her eyes on her father, and left her flowers to fade unheeded beside her empty urn.

"Unintelligible mystery of wickedness! That child was just three years old the very day it was forsaken—she abandoned it and me on its birth-day! Twice had that day been observed by us—as the sweetest—the most sacred of holydays; and now that it had again come round—but I not present—for I was on foreign service—thus did she observe it—and disappeared with her paramour. It so happened that we went that day into action—and I committed her and our child to the mercy of God in fervent prayers; for love made me religious—and for their sakes I feared though I shunned not death.

I lay all night among the wounded on the field of battle —and it was a severe frost. Pain kept me from sleep, but I saw them as distinctly as in a dream—the mother lying with her child in her bosom in our own bed. Was not that vision mockery enough to drive me mad? After a few weeks a letter came to me from herself—and I kissed it and pressed it to my heart; for no black seal was there—and I knew that little Lucy was alive. No meaning for a while seemed to be in the words—and then they began to blacken into ghastly characters—till at last I gathered from the horrid revelation that she was sunk in sin and shame, steeped for evermore in utmost pollution.

"A friend was with me—and I gave it to him to read —for in my anguish at first I felt no shame—and I watched his face as he read it, that I might see corroboration of the incredible truth, which continued to look like falsehood, even while it pierced my heart with agonizing pangs. 'It may be a forgery,' was all he could utter—after long agitation; but the shape of each letter was too familiar to my eyes—the way in which the paper was folded—and I knew my doom was sealed. Hours must have passed, for the room grew dark—and I asked him to leave me for the night. He kissed my forehead —for we had been as brothers. I saw him next morning—dead—cut nearly in two—yet had he left a paper for me, written an hour before he fell, so filled with holiest friendship, that oh! how even in my agony I wept for him, now but a lump of cold clay and blood, and envied him at the same time a soldier's grave!

"And has the time indeed come that I can thus speak calmly of all that horror! The body was brought into my room, and it lay all day and all night close to my bed. But false was I to all our life-long friendship—and almost with indifference I looked upon the corpse. Momentary starts of affection seized me—but I cared little or nothing for the death of him, the tender and the true, the gentle and the brave, the pious and the noble-hearted; my anguish was all for her, the cruel and the faithless, dead to honour, to religion dead—dead to all the sanctities of nature—for her, and for her alone, I suffered all ghastliest agonies—nor any comfort came to me in my despair, from the conviction that she was worthless; for desperately wicked as she had shown herself to be—oh! crowding came back upon me all our hours of happiness—all her sweet smiles—all her loving looks—all her affectionate words—all her conjugal and maternal tendernesses; and the loss of all that bliss—the change of it all into strange, sudden, shameful, and everlasting misery, smote me till I swooned, and was delivered up to a trance in which the rueful reality was mixed up with fantasms more horrible than man's mind can suffer out of the hell of sleep!

"Wretched coward that I was to outlive that night! But my mind was weak from great loss of blood—and the blow so stunned me that I had not strength of resolution to die. I might have torn off the bandages—for nobody watched me—and my wounds were thought mortal. But the love of life had not welled out with all those vital streams; and as I began to recover, another

passion took possession of me—and I vowed that there should be atonement and revenge. I was not obscure. My dishonour was known through the whole army. Not a tent—not a hut—in which my name was not bandied about—a jest in the mouths of profligate poltroons—pronounced with pity by the compassionate brave. I had commanded my men with pride. No need had I ever had to be ashamed when I looked on our colours; but no wretch led out to execution for desertion or cowardice ever shrunk from the sun, and from the sight of human faces arrayed around him, with more shame and horror than did I when, on my way to a transport, I came suddenly on my own corps, marching to music as if they were taking up a position in the line of battle—as they had often done with me at their head—all sternly silent before an approaching storm of fire. What brought them there? To do me honour! Me, smeared with infamy, and ashamed to lift my eyes from the mire. Honour had been the idol I worshipped—alas! too, too passionately far—and now I lay in my litter like a slave sold to stripes—and heard as if a legion of demons were mocking me with loud and long huzzas; and then a confused murmur of blessings on our noble commander, so they called me—me, despicable in my own esteem—scorned—insulted—forsaken—me, who could not bind to mine the bosom that for years had touched it—a wretch so poor in power over a woman's heart, that no sooner had I left her to her own thoughts than she felt that she had never loved me, and, opening her fair breast to a new-born bliss, sacrificed me without remorse—nor

could bear to think of me any more as her husband—not even for sake of that child whom I knew she loved—for no hypocrite was she there; and oh! lost creature though she was—even now I wonder over that unaccountable desertion—and much she must have suffered from the image of that small bed, beside which she used to sit for hours, perfectly happy from the sight of that face which I too so often blessed in her hearing, because it was so like her own! Where is my child? Have I frightened her away into the wood by my unfatherly looks? She too will come to hate me—oh! see yonder her face and her figure like a fairy's, gliding through among the broom! Sorrow has no business with her—nor she with sorrow. Yet—even her how often have I made weep! All the unhappiness she has ever known has all come from me; and would I but leave her alone to herself in her affectionate innocence, the smile that always lies on her face when she is asleep would remain there—only brighter—all the time her eyes are awake; but I dash it away by my unhallowed harshness, and people looking on her in her trouble, wonder to think how sad can be the countenance even of a little child. O God of mercy! what if she were to die!"

"She will not die—she will live," said the pitying pastor—"and many happy years—my son—are yet in store even for you—sorely as you have been tried; for it is not in nature that your wretchedness can endure for ever. She is in herself all-sufficient for a father's happiness. You prayed just now that the God of

Mercy would spare her life—and has he not spared it? Tender flower as she seems, yet how full of life! Let not then your gratitude to Heaven be barren in your heart; but let it produce there resignation—if need be, contrition—and, above all, forgiveness."

"Yes! I had a hope to live for—mangled as I was in body, and racked in mind—a hope that was a faith—and bitter-sweet it was in imagined foretaste of fruition—the hope and the faith of revenge. They said he would not aim at my life. But what was that to me who thirsted for his blood? Was he to escape death, because he dared not wound bone, or flesh, or muscle of mine, seeing that the assassin had already stabbed my soul? Satisfaction! I tell you that I was for revenge. Not that his blood could wipe out the stain with which my name was imbrued, but let it be mixed with the mould; and he who invaded my marriage-bed—and hallowed was it by every generous passion that ever breathed upon woman's breast—let him fall down in convulsions, and vomit out his heart's blood, at once in expiation of his guilt, and in retribution dealt out to him by the hand of him whom he had degraded in the eyes of the whole world beneath the condition even of a felon, and delivered over in my misery to contempt and scorn. I found him out;—there he was before me—in all that beauty by women so beloved—graceful as Apollo; and with a haughty air, as if proud of an achievement that adorned his name, he saluted me—*her husband*—on the field,—and let the wind play with his

raven tresses—his curled love-locks—and then presented himself to my aim in an attitude a statuary would have admired. I shot him through the heart."

The good old man heard the dreadful words with a shudder—yet they had come to his ears not unexpectedly, for the speaker's aspect had gradually been growing black with wrath, long before he ended in an avowal of murder. Nor, on ceasing his wild words and distracted demeanour, did it seem that his heart was touched with any remorse. His eyes retained their savage glare—his teeth were clenched—and he feasted on his crime.

"Nothing but a full faith in Divine Revelation," solemnly said his aged friend, "can subdue the evil passions of our nature, or enable conscience itself to see and repent of sin. Your wrongs were indeed great—but without a change wrought in all your spirit, alas! my son! you cannot hope to see the kingdom of heaven."

"Who dares to condemn the deed? He deserved death—and whence was doom to come but from me the Avenger? I took his life—but once I saved it. I bore him from the battlements of a fort stormed in vain—after we had all been blown up by the springing of a mine; and from bayonets that had drunk my blood as well as his—and his widowed mother blessed me as the saviour of her son. I told my wife to receive him as a brother—and for my sake to feel towards him a sister's love. Who shall speak of temptation—or frailty—or infatuation to me? Let the fools hold their peace. His

wounds became dearer to her abandoned heart than mine had ever been; yet had her cheek lain many a night on the scars that seamed this breast—for I was not backward in battle, and our place was in the van. I was no coward, that she who loved heroism in him should have dishonoured her husband. True, he was younger by some years than me—and God had given him pernicious beauty—and she was young, too—oh! the brightest of all mortal creatures the day she became my bride—nor less bright with that baby at her bosom—a matron in girlhood's resplendent spring! Is youth a plea for wickedness? And was I old? I, who, in spite of all I have suffered, feel the vital blood yet boiling as to a furnace; but cut off for ever by her crime from fame and glory—and from a soldier in his proud career, covered with honour in the eyes of all my countrymen, changed in an hour into an outlawed and nameless slave. My name has been borne by a race of heroes—the blood in my veins has flowed down a long line of illustrious ancestors—and here am I now—a hidden disguised hypocrite—dwelling among peasants—and afraid—ay, afraid, because ashamed, to lift my eyes freely from the ground even among the solitudes of the mountains, lest some wandering stranger should recognize me, and see the brand of ignominy her hand and his—accursed both—burnt in upon my brow. She forsook this bosom—but tell me if it was in disgust with these my scars?"

And as he bared it, distractedly, that noble chest was seen indeed disfigured with many a gash—on which a

wife might well have rested her head with gratitude not less devout because of a lofty pride mingling with life-deep affection. But the burst of passion was gone by—and, covering his face with his hands, he wept like a child.

"Oh! cruel—cruel was her conduct to me; yet what has mine been to her—for so many years! I could not tear her image from my memory—not an hour has it ceased to haunt me; since I came among these mountains, her ghost is for ever at my side. I have striven to drive it away with curses, but still there is the phantom. Sometimes—beautiful as on our marriage day—all in purest white—adorned with flowers—it wreathes its arms around my neck—and offers its mouth to my kisses—and then all at once is changed into a leering wretch, retaining a likeness of my bride—then into a corpse. And perhaps she is dead—dead of cold and hunger: she whom I cherished in all luxury—whose delicate frame seemed to bring round itself all the purest air and sweetest sunshine—she may have expired in the very mire—and her body been huddled into some hole called a pauper's grave. And I have suffered all this to happen her! Or have I suffered her to become one of the miserable multitude who support hated and hateful life by prostitution? Black was her crime; yet hardly did she deserve to be one of that howling crew—she whose voice was once so sweet, her eyes so pure, and her soul so innocent—for up to the hour I parted with her weeping, no evil thought had ever been hers;—then why, ye eternal

Heavens! why fell she from that sphere where she shone like a star? Let that mystery that shrouds my mind in darkness be lightened—let me see into its heart—and know but the meaning of her guilt—and then may I be able to forgive it; but for five years, day and night, it has troubled and confounded me—and from blind and baffled wrath with an iniquity that remains like a pitch-black night through which I cannot grope my way, no refuge can I find—and nothing is left me but to tear my hair out by handfuls—as, like a madman, I have done—to curse her by name in the solitary glooms, and to call down upon her the curse of God. O wicked—most wicked! Yet He who judges the hearts of his creatures, knows that I have a thousand and a thousand times forgiven her, but that a chasm lay between us, from which, the moment that I came to its brink, a voice drove me back—I know not whether of a good or evil spirit—and bade me leave her to her fate. But she must be dead—and needs not now my tears. O friend! judge me not too sternly—from this my confession; for all my wild words have imperfectly expressed to you but parts of my miserable being—and if I could lay it all before you, you would pity me perhaps as much as condemn—for my worst passions only have now found utterance—all my better feelings will not return nor abide for words—even I myself have forgotten them; but your pitying face seems to say, that they will be remembered at the Throne of Mercy. I forgive her." And with these words he fell down on his knees, and prayed too for pardon to his own sins. The old

man encouraged him not to despair—it needed but a motion of his hand to bring the child from her couch in the cover, and Lucy was folded to her father's heart. The forgiveness was felt to be holy in that embrace.

The day had brightened up into more perfect beauty, and showers were sporting with sunshine on the blue air of Spring. The sky showed something like a rainbow—and the Lake, in some parts quite still, and in some breezy, contained at once shadowy fragments of wood and rock, and waves that would have murmured round the prow of pleasure-boat suddenly hoisting a sail. And such a very boat appeared round a promontory that stretched no great way into the water, and formed with a crescent of low meadow-land a bay that was the first to feel the wind coming down Glencoin. The boatman was rowing heedlessly along, when a sudden squall struck the sail, and in an instant the skiff was upset and went down. No shrieks were heard—and the boatman swam ashore; but a figure was seen struggling where the sail disappeared—and starting from his knees, he who knew not fear plunged into the Lake, and after desperate exertions brought the drowned creature to the side—a female meanly attired—seemingly a stranger—and so attenuated that it was plain she must have been in a dying state, and had she not thus perished, would have had but few days to live. The hair was grey—but the face though withered was not old—and, as she lay on the greensward, the features were beautiful as well as calm in the sunshine.

He stood over her awhile—as if struck motionless—

and then kneeling beside the body, kissed its lips and eyes—and said only, "It is Lucy!"

The old man was close by—and so was that child. They too knelt—and the passion of the mourner held him dumb, with his face close to the face of death—ghastly its glare beside the sleep that knows no waking, and is forsaken by all dreams. He opened the bosom—wasted to the bone—in the idle thought that she might yet breathe—and a paper dropt out into his hand, which he read aloud to himself—unconscious that any one was near. "I am fast dying—and desire to die at your feet. Perhaps you will spurn me—it is right you should; but you will see how sorrow has killed the wicked wretch who was once your wife. I have lived in humble servitude for five years, and have suffered great hardships. I think I am a penitent—and have been told by religious persons that I may hope for pardon from Heaven. Oh! that you would forgive me too! and let me have one look at our Lucy. I will linger about the Field of Flowers—perhaps you will come there, and see me lie down and die on the very spot where we passed a summer day the week of our marriage."

"Not thus could I have kissed thy lips—Lucy—had they been red with life. White are they—and white must they long have been! No pollution on them—nor on that poor bosom now. Contrite tears had long since washed out thy sin. A feeble hand traced these lines—and in them a humble heart said nothing but God's truth. Child—behold your mother. Art thou afraid to touch the dead?"

"No—father—I am not afraid to kiss her lips—as you did now. Sometimes, when you thought me asleep, I have heard you praying for my mother."

"Oh! child! cease—cease—or my heart will burst."

People began to gather about the body—but awe kept them aloof; and as for removing it to a house, none who saw it but knew such care would have been vain, for doubt there could be none that there lay death. So the groups remained for a while at a distance—even the old pastor went a good many paces apart; and under the shadow of that tree the father and child composed her limbs, and closed her eyes, and continued to sit beside her, as still as if they had been watching over one asleep.

That death was seen by all to be a strange calamity to him who had lived long among them—had adopted many of their customs—and was even as one of themselves—so it seemed—in the familiar intercourse of man with man. Some dim notion that this was the dead body of his wife was entertained by many, they knew not why; and their clergyman felt that then there needed to be neither concealment nor avowal of the truth. So in solemn sympathy they approached the body and its watchers; a bier had been prepared: and walking at the head, as if it had been a funeral, the Father of little Lucy, holding her hand, silently directed the procession towards his own house—out of the FIELD OF FLOWERS.

COTTAGES.

HAVE you any intention, dear reader, of building a house in the country? If you have, pray, for your own sake and ours, let it not be a Cottage. We presume that you are obliged to live, one-half of the year at least, in a town. Then why change altogether the character of your domicile and your establishment? You are an inhabitant of Edinburgh, and have a house in the Circus, or Heriot Row, or Abercromby Place, or Queen Street. The said house has five or six stories, and is such a palace as one might expect in the City of Palaces. Your drawing-rooms can, at a pinch, hold some ten score of modern Athenians—your dining-room might feast one-half of the contributors to Blackwood's Magazine—your "placens uxor" has her boudoir—your eldest daughter, now verging on womanhood, her music-room—your boys their own studio—the governess her retreat—and the tutor his den—the housekeeper sits like an overgrown spider in her own sanctum—the butler bargains for his dim apartment—and the four maids must have their front-area window. In short, from cel-

larage to garret, all is complete, and Number Forty-two is really a splendid mansion.

Now, dear reader, far be it from us to question the propriety or prudence of such an establishment. Your house was not built for nothing—it was no easy thing to get the painters out—the furnishing thereof was no trifle—the feu-duty is really unreasonable—and taxes are taxes still, notwithstanding the principles of free trade, and the universal prosperity of the country. Servants are wasteful, and their wages absurd—and the whole style of living, with long-necked bottles, most extravagant. But still we do not object to your establishment—far from it, we admire it much; nor is there a single house in town where we make ourselves more agreeable to a late hour, or that we leave with a greater quantity of wine of a good quality under our girdle. Few things would give us more temporary uneasiness, than to hear of any embarrassment in your money concerns. We are not people to forget good fare, we assure you; and long and far may all shapes of sorrow keep aloof from the hospitable board, whether illuminated by gas, oil, or mutton.

But what we were going to say is this—that the head of such a house ought not to live, when ruralizing, in a Cottage. He ought to be consistent. Nothing so beautiful as consistency. What then is so absurd as to cram yourself, your wife, your numerous progeny, and your scarcely less numerous menials, into a concern called a Cottage? The ordinary heat of a baker's oven is very few degrees above that of a brown study, during

the month of July, in a substantial, low-roofed Cottage. Then the smell of the kitchen! How it aggravates the sultry closeness! A strange, compounded, inexplicable smell of animal, vegetable, and mineral matter. It is at the worst during the latter part of the forenoon, when every thing has been got into preparation for cookery. There is then nothing savoury about the smell—it is dull, dead—almost catacombish. A small back-kitchen has it in its power to destroy the sweetness of any Cottage. Add a scullery, and the three are omnipotent. Of the eternal clashing of pots, pans, plates, trenchers, and general crockery, we now say nothing; indeed, the sound somewhat relieves the smell, and the ear comes occasionally in to the aid of the nose. Such noises are windfalls; but not so the scolding of cook and butler—at first low and tetchy, with pauses—then sharp, but still interrupted—by and by, loud and ready in reply—finally a discordant gabble of vulgar fury, like maniacs quarrelling in bedlam. Hear it you must—you and all the strangers. To explain it away is impossible; and your fear is, that Alecto, Tisiphone, or Megæra, will come flying into the parlour with a bloody cleaver, dripping with the butler's brains. During the time of the quarrel the spit has been standing still, and a gigot of the five-year-old black-face burnt on one side to a cinder.—"To dinner with what appetite you may."

It would be quite unpardonable to forget one especial smell which irretrievably ruined our happiness during a whole summer—the smell of a dead rat. The accursed vermin died somewhere in the Cottage; but whether

beneath a floor, within lath and plaster, or in roof, baffled the conjectures of the most sagacious. The whole family used to walk about the Cottage for hours every day, snuffing on a travel of discovery; and we distinctly remember the face of one elderly maiden-lady at the moment she thought she had traced the source of the fumèe to the wall behind a window-shutter. But even at the very same instant we ourselves had proclaimed it with open nostril from a press in an opposite corner. Terriers were procured—but the dog Billy himself would have been at fault. To pull down the whole Cottage would have been difficult—at least to build it up again would have been so; so we had to submit. Custom, they say, is second nature, but not when a dead rat is in the house. No, none can ever become accustomed to that; yet good springs out of evil—for the live rats could not endure it, and emigrated to a friend's house, about a mile off, who has never had a sound night's rest from that day. We have not revisited our Cottage for several years; but time does wonders, and we were lately told by a person of some veracity, that the smell was then nearly gone—but our informant is a gentleman of blunted olfactory nerves, having been engaged from seventeen to seventy in a soap-work.

Smoke too! More especially that mysterious and infernal sort, called back-smoke! The old proverb, "No smoke without fire," is a base lie. We have seen smoke without fire in every room in a most delightful Cottage we inhabited during the dog-days. The moment you rushed for refuge even into a closet, you were blinded

and stifled; nor shall we ever forget our horror on being within an ace of smotheration in the cellar. At last, we groped our way into the kitchen. Neither cook nor jack was visible. We heard, indeed, a whirring and revolving noise—and then suddenly Girzie swearing through the mist. Yet all this while people were admiring our Cottage from a distance, and especially this self-same accursed back-smoke, some portions of which had made an excursion up the chimneys, and was wavering away in a spiral form to the sky, in a style captivating to Mr Price on the Picturesque.

No doubt, there are many things very romantic about a Cottage. Creepers, for example. Why, sir, these creepers are the most mischievous nuisance that can afflict a family. There is no occasion for mentioning names, but—devil take all parasites. Some of the rogues will actually grow a couple of inches upon you in one day's time; and when all other honest plants are asleep, the creepers are hard at it all night long, stretching out their toes and their fingers, and catching an inextricable hold of every wall they can reach, till, finally, you see them thrusting their impudent heads through the very slates. Then, like other low-bred creatures, they are covered with vermin. All manner of moths—the most grievous grubs—slimy slugs—spiders spinning toils to ensnare the caterpillar—erwigs and slaters, that would raise the gorge of a country curate—wood-lice—the slaver of gowk's-spittle—midges—jocks-with-the-many-legs: in short, the whole plague of insects infest that—Virgin's bower. Open the lattice for half an

hour, and you find yourself in an entomological museum. Then, there are no pins fixing down the specimens. All these beetles are alive, more especially the enormous blackguard crawling behind your ear. A moth plumps into your tumbler of cold negus, and goes whirling round in meal, till he makes absolute porritch. As you open your mouth in amazement, the large blue-bottle fly, having made his escape from the spiders, and seeing that not a moment is to be lost, precipitates himself head-foremost down your throat, and is felt, after a few ineffectual struggles, settling in despair at the very bottom of your stomach. Still, no person will be so unreasonable as to deny that creepers on a Cottage are most beautiful. For the sake of their beauty, some little sacrifices must be made of one's comforts, especially as it is only for one-half of the year, and last really was a most delightful summer.

How truly romantic is a thatch roof! The eaves how commodious for sparrows! What a paradise for rats and mice! What a comfortable colony of vermin! They all bore their own tunnels in every direction, and the whole interior becomes a Cretan labyrinth. Frush, frush becomes the whole cover in a few seasons; and not a bird can open his wing, not a rat switch his tail, without scattering the straw like chaff. Eternal repairs! Look when you will, and half-a-dozen thatchers are riding on the rigging: of all operatives the most inoperative. Then there is always one of the number descending the ladder for a horn of ale. Without warning, the straw is all used up; and no more fit for the

purpose can be got within twenty miles. They hint heather—and you sigh for slate—the beautiful sky-blue, sea-green, Ballahulish slate! But the summer is nearly over and gone, and you must be flitting back to the city; so you let the job stand over to spring, and the soaking rains and snows of a long winter search the Cottage to its heart's-core, and every floor is erelong laden with a crop of fungi—the bed-posts are ornamented curiously with lichens, and mosses bathe the walls with their various and inimitable lustre.

Every thing is romantic that is pastoral—and what more pastoral than sheep? Accordingly, living in a Cottage, you kill your own mutton. Great lubberly Leicesters or South-Downs are not worth the mastication, so you keep the small black-face. Stone walls are ugly things, you think, near a Cottage, so you have rails or hurdles. Day and night are the small black-face, out of pure spite, bouncing through or over all impediments, after an adventurous leader, and, despising the daisied turf, keep nibbling away at all your rare flowering shrubs, till your avenue is a desolation. Every twig has its little ball of wool, and it is a rare time for the nest-makers. You purchase a colley, but he compromises the affair with the fleecy nation, and contents himself with barking all night long at the moon, if there happen to be one, if not, at the firmament of his kennel. You are too humane to hang or drown Luath, so you give him to a friend. But Luath is in love with the cook, and pays her nightly visits. Afraid of being entrapped should he step into the kennel, he takes up his

station, after supper, on a knoll within ear-range, and pointing his snout to the stars, joins the music of the spheres, and is himself a perfect Sirius. The gardener at last gets orders to shoot him—and the gun being somewhat rusty, bursts and blows off his left hand—so that Andrew Fairservice retires on a pension.

Of all breeds of cattle we most admire the Alderney. They are slim, delicate, wild-deer-looking creatures, that give an air to a Cottage. But they are most capricious milkers. Of course you make your own butter; that is to say, with the addition of a dozen purchased pounds weekly, you are not very often out of that commodity. Then, once or twice in a summer, they suddenly lose their temper, and chase the governess and your daughters over the edge of a gravel-pit. Nothing they like so much as the tender sprouts of cauliflower, nor do they abhor green pease. The garden-hedge is of privet, a pretty fence, and fast growing, but not formidable to a four-year-old. On going to eat a few gooseberries by sunrise, you start a covey of cows, that in their alarm plunge into the hot-bed with a smash, as if all the glass in the island had been broken—and rushing out at the gate at the critical instant little Tommy is tottering in, they leave the heir-apparent, scarcely deserving that name, half hidden in the border. There is no sale for such outlandish animals in the home-market, and it is not Martinmas, so you must make a present of them to the president or five silver-cup-man of an agricultural society, and you receive in return a sorry red round, desperately saltpetred, at Christmas.

What is a Cottage in the country, unless "your banks are all furnished with bees, whose murmurs invite one to sleep?" There the hives stand, like four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row. Not a more harmless insect in all this world than a bee. Wasps are devils incarnate, but bees are fleshly sprites, as amiable as industrious. You are strolling along, in delightful mental vacuity, looking at a poem of Barry Cornwall's, when smack comes an infuriated honey-maker against your eyelid, and plunges into you the fortieth part of an inch of sting saturated in venom. The wretch clings to your lid like a burr, and it feels as if he had a million claws to hold him on while he is darting his weapon into your eyeball. Your banks are indeed well furnished with bees, but their murmurs do not invite you to sleep; on the contrary, away you fly, like a madman, bolt into your wife's room, and roar out for the recipe. The whole of one side of your face is most absurdly swollen, while the other is *in statu quo*. One eye is dwindled away to almost nothing, and is peering forth from its rainbow-coloured envelope, while the other is open as day to melting charity, and shining over a cheek of the purest crimson. Infatuated man! Why could you not purchase your honey? Jemmy Thomson, the poet, would have let you have it, from Habbie's-Howe, the true Pentland elixir, for five shillings the pint; for during this season both the heather and the clover were prolific of the honey-dew, and the Skeps rejoiced over all Scotland on a thousand hills.

We could tell many stories about bees, but that

would be leading us away from the main argument. We remember reading in an American newspaper, some years ago, that the United States lost one of their most upright and erudite judges by bees, which stung him to death in a wood while he was going the circuit. About a year afterwards, we read in the same newspaper, "We are afraid we have lost another judge by bees;" and then followed a somewhat affrightful description of the assassination of another American Blackstone by the same insects. We could not fail to sympathize with both sufferers; for in the summer of the famous comet we ourselves had nearly shared the same fate. Our Newfoundlander upset a hive in his wagaries—and the whole swarm unjustly attacked us. The buzz was an absolute roar—and for the first time in our lives we were under a cloud. Such bizzing in our hair! and of what avail were fifty-times-washed nankeen breeches against the Polish Lancers? With our trusty crutch we made thousands bite the dust—but the wounded and dying crawled up our legs, and stung us cruelly over the lower regions. At last we took to flight, and found shelter in the ice-house. But it seemed as if a new hive had been disturbed in that cool grotto. Again we sallied out, stripping off garment after garment, till, *in puris naturalibus*, we leaped into a window, which happened to be that of the drawing-room, where a large party of ladies and gentlemen were awaiting the dinner-bell—but fancy must dream the rest.

We now offer a Set of Blackwood's Magazine to any

scientific character who will answer this seemingly simple question—what is Damp? Quicksilver is a joke to it, for getting into or out of any place. Capricious as damp is, it is faithful in its affection to all Cottages ornées. What more pleasant than a bow-window? You had better, however, not sit with your back against the wall, for it is as blue and ropy as that of a charnel-house. Probably the wall is tastily papered—a vine-leaf pattern perhaps—or something spriggy—or in the aviary line—or, mayhap, hay-makers, or shepherds piping in the dale. But all distinctions are levelled in the mould—Phyllis has a black patch over her eye, and Strephon seems to be playing on a pair of bellows. Damp delights to descend chimneys, and is one of smoke's most powerful auxiliaries. It is a thousand pities you hung up—just in that unlucky spot—Grecian Williams's Thebes—for now one of the finest water-colour paintings in the world is not worth six-and-eightpence. There is no living in the country without a library. Take down, with all due caution, that enormous tome, the Excursion, and let us hear something of the Pedlar. There is an end to the invention of printing. Lo and behold, blank verse indeed! You cannot help turning over twenty leaves at once, for they are all amalgamated in must and mouldiness. Lord Byron himself is no better than an Egyptian mummy; and the Great Unknown addresses you in hieroglyphics.

We have heard different opinions maintained on the subject of damp sheets. For our own part, we always wish to feel the difference between sheets and cere-

ments. We hate every thing clammy. It is awkward, on leaping out of bed to admire the moon, to drag along with you, glued round the body and members, the whole paraphernalia of the couch. It can never be good for rheumatism—problematical even for fever. Now, be candid—did you ever sleep in perfectly dry sheets in a Cottage ornée? You would not like to say "No, never," in the morning—privately, to host or hostess. But confess publicly, and trace your approaching retirement from all the troubles of this life, to the dimity-curtained cubiculum on Tweedside.

We know of few events so restorative as the arrival of a coachful of one's friends, if the house be roomy. But if every thing there be on a small scale, how tremendous a sudden importation of live cattle! The children are all trundled away out of the Cottage, and their room given up to the young ladies, with all its enigmatical and emblematical wall-tracery. The captain is billeted in the boudoir, on a shake-down. My lady's maid must positively pass the night in the butler's pantry, and the valet makes a dormitory of the store-room. Where the old gentleman and his spouse have been disposed of, remains as controversial a point as the authorship of Junius; but next morning at the breakfast-table, it appears that all have survived the night, and the hospitable hostess remarks, with a self-complacent smile, that small as the Cottage appears, it has wonderful accommodation, and could have easily admitted half a dozen more patients. The visiters politely request to be favoured with a plan of so very

commodious a Cottage, but silently swear never again to sleep in a house of one story, till life's brief tale be told.

But not one half the comforts of a Cottage have yet been enumerated—nor shall they be by us at the present juncture. Suffice it to add, that the strange coachman had been persuaded to put up his horses in the outhouses, instead of taking them to an excellent inn about two miles off. The old black long-tailed steeds, that had dragged the vehicle for nearly twenty years, had been lodged in what was called the Stable, and the horse behind had been introduced into the byre. As bad luck would have it, a small, sick, and surly shelty was in his stall; and without the slightest provocation, he had, during the night-watches, so handled his heels against Mr Fox, that he had not left the senior a leg to stand upon, while he had bit a lump out of the buttocks of Mr Pitt little less than an orange. A cow, afraid of her calf, had committed an assault on the roadster, and tore up his flank with her crooked horn as clean as if it had been a ripping chisel. The party had to proceed with post-horses; and although Mr Dick be at once one of the most skilful and most moderate of veterinary surgeons, his bill at the end of autumn was necessarily as long as that of a proctor. Mr Fox gave up the ghost—Mr Pitt was put on the superannuated list—and Joseph Hume, the hack, was sent to the dogs.

To this condition, then, we must come at last, that if you build at all in the country, it must be a mansion three stories high, at the lowest—large airy rooms—roof of slates and lead—and walls of the freestone or

the Roman cement. No small black-faces, no Alderneys, no beehives. Buy all your vivres, and live like a gentleman. Seldom or never be without a houseful of company. If you manage your family matters properly, you may have your time nearly as much at your own disposal as if you were the greatest of hunkses, and never gave but unavoidable dinners. Let the breakfast-gong sound at ten o'clock—quite soon enough. The young people will have been romping about the parlours or the purlieus for a couple of hours—and will all make their appearance in the beauty of high health and high spirits. Chat away as long as need be, after muffins and mutton-ham, in small groups on sofas and settees, and then slip you away to your library, to add a chapter to your novel, or your history, or to any other task that is to make you immortal. Let gigs and curricles draw up in the circle, and the wooing and betrothed wheel away across a few parishes. Let the pedestrians saunter off into the woods or to the hillside—the anglers be off to loch or river. No great harm even in a game or two at billiards—if such be of any the cue—sagacious spinsters of a certain age, staid dowagers, and bachelors of sedentary habits, may have recourse, without blame, to the chess or backgammon board. At two lunch —and at six the dinner-gong will bring the whole flock together, all dressed—mind that—all dressed, for slovenliness is an abomination. Let no elderly gentleman, however bilious and rich, seek to monopolize a young lady—but study the nature of things. Champagne, of course, and if not all the delicacies, at least all the sub-

stantialities, of the season.. Join the ladies in about two hours—a little elevated or so—almost imperceptibly—but still a little elevated or so; then music—whispering in corners—if moonlight and stars, then an hour's out-of-door study of astronomy—no very regular supper—but an appearance of plates and tumblers, and to bed, to happy dreams and slumbers light, at the witching hour. Let no gentleman or lady snore, if it can be avoided, lest they annoy the crickets; and if you hear any extraordinary noise round and round about the mansion, be not alarmed, for why should not the owls choose their own hour of revelry?

Fond as we are of the country, we would not, had we our option, live there all the year round. We should just wish to linger into the winter about as far as the middle of December—then to a city—say at once Edinburgh. There is as good skating-ground, and as good curling-ground, at Lochend and Duddingstone, as any where in all Scotland—nor is there any where else better beef and greens. There is no perfection any where, but Edinburgh society is excellent. We are certainly agreeable citizens; with just a sufficient spice of party spirit to season the feast of reason and the flow of soul, and to prevent society from becoming drowsily unanimous. Without the fillip of a little scandal, honest people would fall asleep; and surely it is far preferable to that to abuse one's friends with moderation. Even Literature and the Belles Lettres are not entirely useless; and our Human Life would not be so delightful as that of Mr Rogers, without a few occasional Noctes Ambrosianæ.

But the title of our article recalls our wandering thoughts, and our talk must be of Cottages. Now, think not, beloved reader, that we care not for Cottages, for that would indeed be a gross mistake. But our very affections are philosophical; our sympathies have all their source in reason; and our admiration is always built on the foundation of truth. Taste, and feeling, and thought, and experience, and knowledge of this life's concerns, are all indispensable to the true delights the imagination experiences in beholding a beautiful *bona fide* Cottage. It must be the dwelling of the poor; and it is that which gives it its whole character. By the poor, we mean not paupers, beggars; but families who, to eat, must work, and who, by working, may still be able to eat. Plain, coarse, not scanty, but unsuperfluous fare is theirs from year's-end to year's-end, excepting some decent and grateful change on chance holydays of nature's own appointment—a wedding, or a christening, or a funeral. Yes, a funeral; for when this mortal coil is shuffled off, why should the hundreds of people that come trooping over muirs and mosses to see the body deposited, walk so many miles, and lose a whole day's work, without a dinner? And, if there be a dinner, should it not be a good one? And if a good one, will the company not be social? But this is a subject for a future paper, nor need such paper be of other than a cheerful character. Poverty, then, is the builder and beautifier of all huts and cottages. But the views of honest poverty are always hopeful and prospective. Strength of muscle and strength of mind form a truly

Holy Alliance; and the future brightens before the steadfast eyes of trust. Therefore, when a house is built in the valley, or on the hillside—be it that of the poorest cottar—there is some little room, or nook, or spare place, which hope consecrates to the future. Better times may come—a shilling or two may be added to the week's wages—parsimony may accumulate a small capital in the Savings bank sufficient to purchase an old eight-day clock, a chest of drawers for the wife, a curtained bed for the lumber-place, which a little labour will convert into a bed-room. It is not to be thought that the pasture-fields become every year greener, and the corn-fields every harvest more yellow—that the hedgerows grow to thicker fragrance, and the birch-tree waves its tresses higher in the air, and expands its white-rinded stem almost to the bulk of a tree of the forest—and yet that there shall be no visible progress from good to better in the dwelling of those whose hands and hearts thus cultivate the soil into rejoicing beauty. As the whole land prospers, so does each individual dwelling. Every ten years, the observing eye sees a new expression on the face of the silent earth; the law of labour is no melancholy lot; for to industry the yoke is easy, and content is its own exceeding great reward.

Therefore, it does our heart good to look on a Cottage. Here the objections to straw-roofs have no application. A few sparrows chirping and fluttering in the eaves can do no great harm, and they serve to amuse the children. The very baby in the cradle, when all the

family are in the fields, mother and all, hears the cheerful twitter, and is reconciled to solitude. The quantity of corn that a few sparrows can eat—greedy creatures as they are—cannot be very deadly; and it is chiefly in the winter time that they attack the stacks, when there is much excuse to be made on the plea of hunger. As to the destruction of a little thatch, why, there is not a boy about the house, above ten years, who is not a thatcher, and there is no expense in such repairs. Let the honeysuckle too steal up the wall, and even blind unchecked a corner of the kitchen-window. Its fragrance will often cheer unconsciously the labourer's heart, as, in the midday-hour of rest, he sits dandling his child on his knee, or converses with the passing pedlar. Let the moss-rose tree flourish, that its bright blush-balls may dazzle in the kirk the eyes of the lover of fair Helen Irwin, as they rise and fall with every movement of a bosom yet happy in its virgin innocence. Nature does not spread in vain her flowers in flush and fragrance over every obscure nook of earth. Simple and pure is the delight they inspire. Not to the poet's eye alone is their language addressed. The beautiful symbols are understood by lowliest minds; and while the philosophical Wordsworth speaks of the meanest flower that blows giving a joy too deep for tears, so do all mankind feel the exquisite truth of Burns's more simple address to the mountain-daisy which his ploughshare had upturned. The one touches sympathies too profound to be general—the other speaks as a son of the

soil affected by the fate of the most familiar flower that springs from the bosom of our common dust.

Generally speaking, there has been a spirit of improvement at work, during these last twenty years, upon all the Cottages in Scotland. The villages are certainly much neater and cleaner than formerly, and in very few respects, if any, positively offensive. Perhaps none of them have—nor ever will have—the exquisite trimness, the habitual and hereditary rustic elegance, of the best villages of England. There, even the idle and worthless have an instinctive love of what is decent, and orderly, and pretty in their habitations. The very drunkard must have a well-sanded floor, a clean-swept hearth, clear-polished furniture, and uncobwebbed walls to the room in which he quaffs, guzzles, and smokes himself into stupidity. His wife may be a scold, but seldom a slattern—his children ill taught, but well apparelled. Much of this is observable even among the worst of the class; and, no doubt, such things must also have their effect in tempering and restraining excesses. Whereas, on the other hand, the house of a well-behaved, well-doing English villager is a perfect model of comfort and propriety. In Scotland, the houses of the dissolute are always dens of dirt, and disorder, and distraction. All ordinary goings-on are inextricably confused—meals eaten in different nooks, and at no regular hour—nothing in its right place or time—the whole abode as if on the eve of a flitting; while, with few exceptions, even in the dwellings of the best families in the village, one may

detect occasional forgetfulness of trifling matters, that, if remembered, would be found greatly conducive to comfort—occasional insensibilities to what would be graceful in their condition, and might be secured at little expense and less trouble—occasional blindness to minute deformities that mar the aspect of the household, and which an awakened eye would sweep away as absolute nuisances. Perhaps the very depth of their affections—the solemnity of their religious thoughts—and the reflective spirit in which they carry on the warfare of life—hide from them the perception of what, after all, is of such very inferior moment, and even create a sort of austerity of character which makes them disregard, too much, trifles that appear to have no influence or connexion with the essence of weal or woe. Yet if there be any truth in this, it affords, we confess, an explanation rather than a justification.

Our business at present, however, is rather with single Cottages than with villages. We Scottish people have, for some years past, been doing all we could to make ourselves ridiculous, by claiming for our capital the name of Modern Athens, and talking all manner of nonsense about a city which stands nobly on its own proper foundation; while we have kept our mouths comparatively shut about the beauty of our hills and vales, and the rational happiness that every where overflows our native land. Our character is to be found in the country; and therefore, gentle reader, behold along with us a specimen of Scottish scenery. It is not above some four miles long—its breadth somewhere about a third of its length;

a fair oblong, sheltered and secluded by a line of varied eminences, on some of which lies the power of cultivation, and over others the vivid verdure peculiar to a pastoral region; while, telling of disturbed times past for ever, stand yonder the ruins of an old fortalice or keep, picturesque in its deserted decay. The plough has stopped at the edge of the profitable and beautiful coppice-woods, and encircled the tall elm-grove. The rocky pasturage, with its clovery and daisied turf, is alive with sheep and cattle—its briery knolls with birds—its broom and whins with bees—and its wimpling burn with trouts and minnows glancing through the shallows, or leaping among the cloud of insects that glitter over its pools. Here and there a cottage—not above twenty in all—one low down in the holm, another on a cliff beside the waterfall: that is the mill—another breaking the horizon in its more ambitious station—and another far up at the hill-foot, where there is not a single tree, only shrubs and brackens. On a bleak day, there is but little beauty in such a glen; but when the sun is cloudless, and all the light serene, it is a place where poet or painter may see visions, and dream dreams, of the very age of gold. At such seasons, there is a homefelt feeling of humble reality, blending with the emotions of imagination. In such places, the low-born, high-souled poets of old breathed forth their songs, and hymns, and elegies—the undying lyrical poetry of the heart of Scotland.

Take the remotest Cottage first in order, HILLFOOT, and hear who are its inmates—the Schoolmaster and his

spouse. The schoolhouse stands on a little unappropriated piece of ground—at least it seems to be so—quite at the head of the glen; for there the hills sink down on each side, and afford an easy access to the seat of learning from two neighbouring vales, both in the same parish. Perhaps fifty scholars are there taught—and with their small fees, and his small salary, Allan Easton is contented. Allan was originally intended for the Church; but some peccadilloes obstructed his progress with the Presbytery, and he never was a preacher. That disappointment of all his hopes was for many years grievously felt, and somewhat soured his mind with the world. It is often impossible to recover one single false step in the slippery road of life—and Allan Easton, year after year, saw himself falling farther and farther into the rear of almost all his contemporaries. One became a minister, and got a manse, with a stipend of twenty chalders; another grew into an East India Nabob; one married the laird's widow, and kept a pack of hounds—another expanded into a colonel—one cleared a plum by a cotton-mill—another became the Crœsus of a bank—while Allan, who had beat them all hollow at all the classes, wore second-hand clothes, and lived on the same fare with the poorest hind in the parish. He had married, rather too late, the partner of his frailties—and after many trials, and, as he thought, not a few persecutions, he got settled at last, when his head, not very old, was getting grey, and his face somewhat wrinkled. His wife, during his worst poverty, had gone again into service, the lot, indeed, to which she had been born; and

Allan had struggled and starved upon private teaching. His appointment to the parish-school had, therefore, been to them both a blessed elevation. The office was respectable—and loftier ambition had long been dead. Now they are old people—considerably upwards of sixty—and twenty years' professional life have converted Allan Easton, once the wild and eccentric genius, into a staid, solemn, formal, and pedantic pedagogue. All his scholars love him, for even in the discharge of such very humble duties, talents make themselves felt and respected; and the kindness of an affectionate and once sorely wounded, but now healed heart, is never lost upon the susceptible imaginations of the young. Allan has sometimes sent out no contemptible scholars, as scholars go in Scotland, to the universities; and his heart has warmed within him when he has read their names, in the newspaper from the manse, in the list of successful competitors for prizes. During vacation-time, Allan and his spouse leave their cottage locked up, and disappear, none know exactly whither, on visits to an old friend or two, who have not altogether forgotten them in their obscurity. During the rest of the year, his only out-of-doors' amusement is an afternoon's angling, an art in which it is universally allowed he excels all mortal men, both in river and loch; and often, during the long winter nights, when the shepherd is walking by his dwelling, to visit his "ain lassie," down the burn, he hears Allan's fiddle playing, in the solitary silence, some one of those Scottish melodies, that we know not whether it be cheerful or plaintive, but soothing to every heart that

has been at all acquainted with grief. Rumour says too, but rumour has not a scrupulous conscience, that the Schoolmaster, when he meets with pleasant company, either at home or a friend's house, is not averse to a hospitable cup, and that then the memories of other days crowd upon his brain, and loosen his tongue into eloquence. Old Susan keeps a sharp warning eye upon her husband on all such occasions; but Allan braves its glances, and is forgiven.

We see only the uncertain glimmer of their dwelling through the low-lying mist: and therefore we cannot describe it, as if it were clearly before our eyes. But should you ever chance to angle your way up to HILL-FOOT, admire Allan Easton's flower-garden, and the jargonel pear-tree on the southern gable. The climate is somewhat high, but it is not cold; and, except when the spring-frosts come late and sharp, there do all blossoms and fruits abound, on every shrub and tree native to Scotland. You will hardly know how to distinguish —or rather, to speak in clerkly phrase, to analyse the sound prevalent over the fields and air; for it is made up of that of the burn, of bees, of old Susan's wheel, and the hum of the busy school. But now it is the play-hour, and Allan Easton comes into his kitchen for his frugal dinner. Brush up your Latin, and out with a few of the largest trouts in your pannier. Susan fries them in fresh butter and oatmeal—the greyhaired pedagogue asks a blessing—and a merrier man, within the limits of becoming mirth, you never passed an hour's

talk withal. So much for Allan Easton and Susan his spouse.

You look as if you wished to ask who inhabits the Cottage—on the left hand yonder—that stares upon us with four front windows, and pricks up its ears like a new-started hare? Why, sir, that was once a Shooting-box. It was built about twenty years ago, by a sporting gentleman of two excellent double-barrelled guns, and three staunch pointers. He attempted to live there, several times, from the 12th of August till the end of September, and went pluffing disconsolately among the hills from sunrise to sunset. He has been long dead and buried; and the Box, they say, is now haunted. It has been attempted to be let furnished, and there is now a board to that effect hung out like an escutcheon. Picturesque people say it ruins the whole beauty of the glen; but we must not think so, for it is not in the power of the ugliest house that ever was built to do that, although, to effect such a purpose, it is unquestionably a skilful contrivance. The window-shutters have been closed for several years, and the chimneys look as if they had breathed their last. It stands in a perpetual eddy, and the ground shelves so all around it, that there is barely room for a barrel to catch the rain-drippings from the slate-eaves. If it be indeed haunted, pity the poor ghost! You may have it on a lease, short or long, for merely paying the taxes. Every year it costs some pounds in advertisements. What a jointure-house it would be for a relict! By name, WINDY-KNOWE.

Nay, let us not fear to sketch the character of its last inhabitant, for we desire but to speak the truth. Drunkard, stand forward, that we may have a look at you, and draw your picture. There he stands! The mouth of the drunkard, you may observe, contracts a singularly sensitive appearance—seemingly red and rawish; and he is perpetually licking or smacking his lips, as if his palate were dry and adust. His is a thirst that water will not quench. He might as well drink air. His whole being burns for a dram. The whole world is contracted into a caulker. He would sell his soul in such extremity, were the black bottle denied him, for a gulp. Not to save his soul from eternal fire, would he, or rather could he, if left alone with it, refrain from pulling out the plug, and sucking away at destruction. What a snout he turns up to the morning air, inflamed, pimpled, snubby, and snorty, and with a nob at the end on't like one carved out of a stick by the knife of a schoolboy—rough and hot to the very eye—a nose which, rather than pull, you would submit even to be in some degree insulted. A perpetual cough harasses and exhausts him, and a perpetual expectoration. How his hand trembles! It is an effort even to sign his name: one of his sides is certainly not by any means as sound as the other; there has been a touch of palsy there; and the next hint will draw down his chin to his collar-bone, and convert him, a month before dissolution, into a slavering idiot. There is no occupation, small or great, insignificant or important, to which he can turn, for any length of time, his hand, his heart,

or his head. He cannot angle—for his fingers refuse to tie a knot, much more to busk a fly. The glimmer and the glow of the stream would make his brain dizzy—to wet his feet now would, he fears, be death. Yet he thinks that he will go out—during that sunny blink of a showery day—and try the well-known pool in which he used to bathe in boyhood, with the long, matted, green-trailing water-plants depending on the slippery rocks, and the water-ousel gliding from beneath the arch that hides her "procreant cradle," and then sinking like a stone suddenly in the limpid stream. He sits down on the bank, and fumbling in his pouch for his pocket-book, brings out, instead, a pocket-pistol. Turning his fiery face towards the mild, blue, vernal sky, he pours the gurgling brandy down his throat—first one dose, and then another—till, in an hour, stupefied and dazed, he sees not the silvery crimson-spotted trouts, shooting, and leaping, and tumbling, and plunging in deep and shallow; a day on which, with one of Captain Colley's March-Browns, in an hour we could fill our pannier. Or, if it be autumn or winter, he calls, perhaps, with a voice at once gruff and feeble, on old Ponto, and will take a pluff at the partridges. In former days, down they used to go, right and left, in potatoe or turnip-field, broomy brae or stubble—but now his sight is dim and wavering, and his touch trembles on the trigger. The covey whirs off, unharmed in a single feather—and poor Ponto, remembering better days, cannot conceal his melancholy, falls in at his master's heel, and will range no more. Out, as usual, comes the brandy-bottle

—he is still a good shot when his mouth is the mark; and having emptied the fatal flask, he staggers homewards, with the muzzles of his double-barrel frequently pointed to his ear, both being on full cock, and his brains not blown out only by a miracle. He tries to read the newspaper—just arrived—but cannot find his spectacles. Then, by way of variety, he attempts a tune on the fiddle; but the bridge is broken, and her side cracked, and the bass-string snapped—and she is restored to her peg among the cobwebs. In comes a red-headed, stockingless lass, with her carrots in papers, and lays the cloth for dinner—salt beef and greens. But the Major's stomach scunners at the Skye-stot—his eyes roll eagerly for the hot-water—and in a couple of hours he is dead-drunk in his chair, or stoitering and staggering, in aimless dalliance with the scullion, among the pots and pans of an ever-disorderly and dirty kitchen. Mean people, in shabby sporting velveteen dresses, rise up as he enters from the dresser covered with cans, jugs, and quechs, and take off their rusty and greasy napless hats to the Major; and, to conclude the day worthily and consistently, he squelches himself down among the reprobate crew, takes his turn at smutty jest and smuttier song, which drive even the jades out of the kitchen—falls back insensible, exposed to gross and indecent practical jokes from the vilest of the unhanged—and finally is carried to bed on a hand-barrow, with hanging head and heels, like a calf across a butcher's cart, and, with glazed eyes and lolling tongue, is tumbled upon the quilt—if ever to awake it is extremely doubtful;

but if awake he do, it is to the same wretched round of brutal degradation—a career, of which the inevitable close is an unfriended death-bed and a pauper's grave. O hero! six feet high, and once with a brawn like Hercules—in the prime of life too—well born and well bred—once bearing the king's commission—and on that glorious morn, now forgotten, or bitterly remembered, thanked on the field of battle by Picton, though he of the fighting division was a hero of few words—is that a death worthy of a man—a soldier—and a Christian? A dram-drinker! Faugh! faugh! Look over—lean over that stile, where a pig lies wallowing in mire—and a voice, faint and feeble, and far off, as if it came from some dim and remote world within your lost soul will cry, that of the two beasts, that bristly one, agrunt in sensual sleep, with its snout snoring across the husk trough, is, as a physical, moral, and intellectual being, superior to you, late Major in his Majesty's —— regiment of foot, now dram-drinker, drunkard, and dotard, and self-doomed to a disgraceful and disgusting death ere you shall have completed your thirtieth year. What a changed being from that day when you carried the colours, and were found, the bravest of the brave, and the most beautiful of the beautiful, with the glorious tatters wrapped round your body all drenched in blood, your hand grasping the broken sabre, and two grim Frenchmen lying hacked and hewed at your feet! Your father and your mother saw your name in the "Great Lord's" Despatch; and it was as much as he could do to keep her from falling on the floor, for "her

joy was like a deep affright!" Both are dead now; and better so, for the sight of that blotched face and those glazed eyes, now and then glittering in fitful frenzy, would have killed them both, nor, after such a spectacle, could their old bones have rested in the grave.

Alas, Scotland—ay, well-educated, moral, religious Scotland can show, in the bosom of her bonny banks and braes, cases worse than this; at which, if there be tears in heaven, the angels weep. Look at that greyheaded man, of threescore and upwards, sitting by the wayside! He was once an Elder of the Kirk, and a pious man he was, if ever piety adorned the temples—"the lyart haffets, wearing thin and bare," of a Scottish peasant. What eye beheld the many hundred steps, that one by one, with imperceptible gradation, led him down—down—down to the lowest depths of shame, suffering, and ruin? For years before it was bruited abroad through the parish that Gabriel Mason was addicted to drink, his wife used to sit weeping alone in the spence when her sons and daughters were out at their work in the fields, and the infatuated man, fierce in the excitement of raw ardent spirits, kept causelessly raging and storming through every nook of that once so peaceful tenement, which for many happy years had never been disturbed by the loud voice of anger or reproach. His eyes were seldom turned on his unhappy wife except with a sullen scowl, or fiery wrath; but when they did look on her with kindness, there was also a rueful self-upbraiding in their expression, on account of his cruelty; and at sight of such transitory tenderness, her heart would overflow with

forgiving affection, and her sunk eyes with unendurable tears. But neither domestic sin nor domestic sorrow will conceal from the eyes and the ears of men; and at last Gabriel Mason's name was a byword in the mouth of the scoffer. One Sabbath he entered the kirk in a state of miserable abandonment, and from that day he was no longer an elder. To regain his character seemed to him, in his desperation, beyond the power of man, and against the decree of God. So he delivered himself up, like a slave, to that one appetite, and in a few years his whole household had gone to destruction. His wife was a matron, almost in the prime of life, when she died; but as she kept wearing away to the other world, her face told that she felt her years had been too many in this. Her eldest son, unable, in pride and shame, to lift up his eyes at kirk or market, went away to the city, and enlisted into a regiment about to embark on foreign service. His two sisters went to take farewell of him, but never returned; one, it is said, having died of a fever in the Infirmary, just as if she had been a pauper; and the other—for the sight of sin, and sorrow, and shame, and suffering, is ruinous to the soul—gave herself up, in her beauty, an easy prey to a destroyer, and doubtless has run her course of agonies, and is now at peace. The rest of the family dropt down, one by one, out of sight, into inferior situations in far-off places; but there was a curse, it was thought, hanging over the family, and of none of them did ever a favourable report come to their native parish; while he, the infatuated sinner, whose vice seemed to have

worked all the wo, remained in the chains of his tyrannical passion, nor seemed ever, for more than the short term of a day, to cease hugging them to his heart. Semblance of all that is most venerable in the character of Scotland's peasantry! Image of a perfect patriarch, walking out to meditate at even-tide! What a noble forehead! Features how high, dignified, and composed! There, sitting in the shade of that old wayside tree, he seems some religious Missionary, travelling to and fro over the face of the earth, seeking out sin and sorrow, that he may tame them under the word of God, and change their very being into piety and peace. Call him not a hoary hypocrite, for he cannot help that noble—that venerable—that apostolic aspect—that dignified figure, as if bent gently by Time, loath to touch it with too heavy a hand—that holy sprinkling over his furrowed temples of the silver-soft, and the snow-white hair—these are the gifts of gracious Nature all—and Nature will not reclaim them, but in the tomb. That is Gabriel Mason—the Drunkard! And in an hour you may, if your eyes can bear the sight, see and hear him staggering up and down the village, cursing, swearing, preaching, praying—stoned by blackguard boys and girls, who hound all the dogs and curs at his heels, till, taking refuge in the smithy or the pot-house, he becomes the sport of grown clowns, and, after much idiot laughter, ruefully mingled with sighs, and groans, and tears, he is suffered to mount upon a table, and urged, perhaps, by reckless folly to give out a text from the Bible, which is nearly all

engraven on his memory—so much and so many other things effaced for ever—and there, like a wild Itinerant, he stammers forth unintentional blasphemy, till the liquor he has been allowed or instigated to swallow, smites him suddenly senseless, and, falling down, he is huddled off into a corner of some lumber-room; and left to sleep—better far for such a wretch were it to death.

Let us descend, then, from that most inclement front, into the lown boundaries of the HOLM. The farm-steading covers a goodly portion of the peninsula shaped by the burn, that here looks almost like a river. With its outhouses it forms three sides of a square, and the fourth is composed of a set of jolly stacks, that will keep the thrashing-machine at work during all the winter. The interior of the square rejoices in a glorious dung-hill, (O, breathe not the name!) that will cover every field with luxuriant harvests—twelve bolls of oats to the acre. There the cattle—oxen yet "lean, and lank, and brown as is the ribbed sea-sand," will, in a few months, eat themselves up, on straw and turnip, into obesity. There turkeys walk demure—there geese waddle, and there the feathery-legged king of Bantam struts among his seraglio, keeping pertly aloof from double-combed Chanticleer, that squire of dames, crowing to his partlets. There a cloud of pigeons often descends among the corny chaff, and then whirs off to the uplands. No chained mastiff looking grimly from the kennel's mouth, but a set of cheerful and sagacious colleys are seen sitting on their hurdies, or "worrying

ither in diversion." A shaggy colt or two, and a brood mare, with a spice of blood, and a foal at her heels, know their shed, and evidently are favourites with the family. Out comes the master, a rosy-cheeked carle, upwards of six feet high, broad-shouldered, with a blue bonnet and velveteen breeches—a man not to be jostled on the crown o' the causey, and a match for any horse-couper from Bewcastle, or gipsy from Yetholm. But let us into the kitchen. There's the wife—a bit tidy body—and pretty withal—more authoritative in her quiet demeanour, than the most tyrannical mere housekeeper that ever thumped a servant lass with the beetle. These three are her daughters. First, Girzie, the eldest, seemingly older than her mother—for she is somewhat hard-favoured, and strong red hair dangling over a squint eye, is apt to give an expression of advanced years, even to a youthful virgin. Vaccination was not known in Girzie's babyhood, but she is, nevertheless, a clean-skinned creature, and her full bosom is white as snow. She is what is delicately called a strapper, rosy-armed as the morning, and not a little of an Aurora about the ankles. She makes her way, in all household affairs, through every impediment, and will obviously prove, whenever the experiment is made, a most excellent wife. Mysie, the second daughter, is more composed, more genteel, and sits sewing, with her a favourite occupation, for she has very neat hands; and is, in fact, the milliner and mantua-maker for all the house. She could no more lift that enormous pan of boiling water off the fire than she could fly, which in

the grasp of Girzie is safely landed on the hearth. Mysie has somewhat of a pensive look, as if in love—and we have heard that she is betrothed to young Mr Rentoul, the divinity student, who lately made a speech before the Anti-patronage Society, and therefore may reasonably expect very soon to get a kirk. But look—there comes dancing in from the ewe-bughts the bright-eyed Bessy, the flower of the flock, the most beautiful girl in Almondale, and fit to be bosom-burd of the Gentle Shepherd himself! O that we were a poet, to sing the innocence of her budding breast! But—Heaven preserve us!—what is the angelic creature about? Making rumble-de-thumps! Now she pounds the potatoes and cabbages as with pestle and mortar! Ever and anon licking the butter off her fingers, and then dashing in the salt! Methinks her laugh is out of all bounds loud—and, unless my eyes deceived me, that stout lout whispered in her delicate ear some coarse jest, that made the eloquent blood mount up into her not undelighted countenance. Heavens and earth!—perhaps an assignation in the barn, or byre, or bush aboon Traquair. But the long dresser is set out with dinner—the gudeman's bonnet is reverently laid aside—and if any stomach assembled there be now empty, it is not likely, judging from appearances, that it will be in that state again before next Sabbath—and it is now but the middle of the week. Was it not my Lord Byron who liked not to see women eat? Poo—poo—nonsense! We like to see them not only eat—but devour. Not a set of teeth round that kitchen-dresser that is not white as the

driven snow. Breath too, in spite of syboes, sweet as dawn-dew—the whole female frame full of health, freshness, spirit, and animation! Away all delicate wooers, thrice-high-fantastical! The diet is wholesome —and the sleep will be sound; therefore eat away, Bessy—nor fear to laugh, although your pretty mouth be full—for we are no poet to madden into misanthropy at your mastication; and, in spite of the heartiest meal ever virgin ate, to us these lips are roses still, "thy eyes are lodestars, and thy breath sweet air." Would for thy sake we had been born a shepherd-groom! No—no—no! For some few joyous years mayest thou wear thy silken snood unharmed, and silence with thy songs the linnet among the broom, at the sweet hour of prime. And then mayest thou plight thy troth—in all the warmth of innocence—to some ardent yet thoughtful youth, who will carry his bride exultingly to his own low-roofed home—toil for her and the children at her knees, through summer's heat and winter's cold—and sit with her in the kirk, when long years have gone by, a comely matron, attended by daughters acknowledged to be fair—but neither so fair, nor so good, nor so pious, as their mother.

What a contrast to the jocund Holm is the Rowan-Tree-Hut—so still, and seemingly so desolate! It is close upon the public road, and yet so low, that you might pass it without observing its turf-roof. There live old Aggy Robinson, the carrier, and her consumptive daughter. Old Aggy has borne that epithet for twenty years, and her daughter is not much under sixty.

That poor creature is bedridden and helpless, and has to be fed almost like a child. Old Aggy has for many years had the same white pony—well named Samson—that she drives three times a-week, all the year round, to and from the nearest market-town, carrying all sorts of articles to nearly twenty different families, living miles apart. Every other day in the week—for there is but one Sabbath either to herself or Samson—she drives coals, or peat, or wood, or lime, or stones for the roads. She is clothed in a man's coat, an old rusty beaver, and a red petticoat. Aggy never was a beauty, and now she is almost frightful, with a formidable beard, and a rough voice—and violent gestures, encouraging the overladen enemy of the Philistines. But as soon as she enters her hut, she is silent, patient, and affectionate, at her daughter's bed-side. They sleep on the same chaff-mattress, and she hears, during the dead of the night, her daughter's slightest moan. Her voice is not rough at all when the poor old creature is saying her prayers; nor, we may be well assured, is its lowest whisper unheard in heaven.

Your eyes are wandering away to the eastern side of the vale, and they have fixed themselves on the Cottage of the Seven Oaks. The grove is a noble one; and, indeed, those are the only timber-trees in the valley. There is a tradition belonging to the grove, but we shall tell it some other time; now, we have to do with that mean-looking Cottage, all unworthy of such magnificent shelter. With its ragged thatch it has a cold cheerless look —almost a look of indigence. The walls are sordid in the

streaked ochre-wash—a wisp of straw supplies the place of a broken pane—the door seems as if it were inhospitable—and every object about is in untended disorder. The green pool in front, with its floating straws and feathers, and miry edge, is at once unhealthy and needless; the hedgerows are full of gaps, and open at the roots; the few garments spread upon them seem to have stiffened in the weather, forgotten by the persons who placed them there; and half-starved young cattle are straying about in what once was a garden. Wretched sight it is; for that dwelling, although never beautiful, was once the tidiest and best-kept in all the district. But what has misery to do with the comfort of its habitation?

The owner of that house was once a man well to do in the world; but he minded this world's goods more than it was fitting to do, and made Mammon his god. Abilities he possessed far beyond the common run of men, and he applied them all, with all the energy of a strong mind, to the accumulation of wealth. Every rule of his life had that for its ultimate end; and he despised a bargain unless he outwitted his neighbour. Without any acts of downright knavery, he was not an honest man—hard to the poor—and a tyrannical master. He sought to wring from the very soil more than it could produce; his servants, among whom were his wife and daughter, he kept at work, like slaves, from twilight to twilight; and was a forestaller and a regrater—a character which, when Political Economy was unknown, was of all the most odious in the judgment of simple

husbandmen. His spirits rose with the price of meal, and every handful dealt out to the beggar was paid like a tax. What could the Bible teach to such a man? What good could he derive from the calm air of the house of worship? He sent his only son to the city, with injunctions instilled into him to make the most of all transactions, at every hazard but that of his money; and the consequence was, in a few years, shame, ruin, and expatriation. His only daughter, imprisoned, dispirited, enthralled, fell a prey to a vulgar seducer; and being driven from her father's house, abandoned herself, in hopeless misery, to a life of prostitution. His wife, heartbroken by cruelty and affliction, was never afterwards altogether in her right mind, and now sits weeping by the hearth, or wanders off to distant places, lone houses and villages, almost in the condition of an idiot—wild-eyed, loose-haired, and dressed like a very beggar. Speculation after speculation failed—with farm-yard crowded with old stacks, he had to curse three successive plentiful harvests—and his mailing was now destitute. The unhappy man grew sour, stern, fierce, in his calamity; and, when his brain was inflamed with liquor, a dangerous madman. He is now a sort of cattle-dealer—buys and sells miserable horses—and at fairs associates with knaves and reprobates, knowing that no honest man will deal with him except in pity or derision. He has more than once attempted to commit suicide; but palsy has stricken him—and in a few weeks he will totter into the grave.

There is a Cottage in that hollow, and you see the

smoke—even the chimney-top, but you could not see the Cottage itself, unless you were within fifty yards of it, so surrounded is it with knolls and small green eminences, in a den of its own, a shoot or scion from the main stem of the valley. It is called THE BROOM, and there is something singular, and not uninteresting, in the history of its owner. He married very early in life, indeed when quite a boy, which is not, by the way, very unusual among the peasantry of Scotland, prudent and calculating as is their general character. David Drysdale, before he was thirty years of age, had a family of seven children, and a pretty family they were as might be seen in all the parish. His life was in theirs, and his mind never wandered far from his fireside. His wife was of a consumptive family, and that insidious and fatal disease never showed in her a single symptom during ten years of marriage; but one cold evening awoke it at her very heart, and in less than two months it hurried her into the grave. Poor creature, such a spectre! When her husband used to carry her, for the sake of a little temporary relief, from chair to couch, and from her couch back again to her bed, twenty times in a day, he hardly could help weeping, with all his consideration, to feel her frame as light as a bundle of leaves. The medical man said, that in all his practice he never had known soul and body keep together in such utter attenuation. But her soul was as clear as ever while racking pain was in her fleshless bones. Even he, her loving husband, was relieved from wo when she expired; for no sadness, no sorrow, could be

equal to the misery of groans from one so patient and so resigned. Perhaps consumption is infectious—so, at least, it seemed here; for first one child began to droop, and then another—the elder ones first; and, within the two following years, there were almost as many funerals from this one house as from all the others in the parish. Yes—they all died—of the whole family not one was spared. Two, indeed, were thought to have pined away in a sort of fearful foreboding—and a fever took off a third—but four certainly died of the same hereditary complaint with the mother; and now not a voice was heard in the house. He did not desert the Broom; and the farm-work was still carried on, nobody could tell how. The servants, to be sure, knew their duty, and often performed it without orders. Sometimes the master put his hand to the plough, but oftener he led the life of a shepherd, and was by himself among the hills. He never smiled—and at every meal he still sat like a man about to be led out to die. But what will not retire away—recede—disappear from the vision of the souls of us mortals! Tenacious as we are of our griefs, even more than of our joys, both elude our grasp. We gaze after them with longing or self-upbraiding aspirations for their return; but they are shadows, and like shadows vanish. Then human duties, lowly though they may be, have their sanative and salutary influence on our whole frame of being. Without their performance conscience cannot be still; with it, conscience brings peace in extremity of evil. Then occupation kills grief, and industry abates passion. No balm for sorrow like

the sweat of the brow poured into the furrows of the earth, in the open air, and beneath the sunshine of heaven. These truths were felt by the childless widower, long before they were understood by him; and when two years had gone drearily, ay dismally, almost despairingly, by—he began at times to feel something like happiness again when sitting among his friends in the kirk, or at their firesides, or in the labours of the field, or even on the market-day, among this world's concerns. Thus, they who knew him and his sufferings, were pleased to recognize what might be called resignation and its grave tranquillity; while strangers discerned in him nothing more than a staid and solemn demeanour, which might be natural to many a man never severely tried, and offering no interruption to the cheerfulness that pervaded their ordinary life.

He had a cousin a few years younger than himself, who had also married when a girl, and when little more than a girl had been left a widow. Her parents were both dead, and she had lived for a good many years as an upper servant, or rather companion and friend, in the house of a relation. As cousins, they had all their lives been familiar and affectionate, and Alice Gray had frequently lived for months at a time at the Broom, taking care of the children, and in all respects one of the family. Their conditions were now almost equally desolate, and a deep sympathy made them now more firmly attached than they ever could have been in better days. Still, nothing at all resembling love was in either of their hearts, nor did the thought of marriage

ever pass across their imaginations. They found, however, increasing satisfaction in each other's company; and looks and words of sad and sober endearment gradually bound them together in affection stronger far than either could have believed. Their friends saw and spoke of the attachment, and of its probable result, long before they were aware of its full nature; and nobody was surprised, but, on the contrary, all were well pleased, when it was understood that they were to be man and wife. There was something almost mournful in their marriage—no rejoicing—no merry-making—but yet visible symptoms of gratitude, contentment, and peace. An air of cheerfulness was not long of investing the melancholy Broom—the very swallows twittered more gladly from the window-corners, and there was joy in the cooing of the pigeons on the sunny roof. The farm awoke through all its fields, and the farm-servants once more sang and whistled at their work. The wandering beggar, who remembered the charity of other years, looked with no cold expression on her who now dealt out his dole; and, as his old eyes were dimmed for the sake of those who were gone, gave a fervent blessing on the new mistress of the house, and prayed that she might long be spared. The neighbours, even they who had best loved the dead, came in with cheerful countenances, and acknowledged in their hearts, that since change is the law of life, there was no one, far or near, whom they could have borne to see sitting in that chair but Alice Gray. The husband knew their feelings from their looks, and his fireside blazed once more with a cheerful lustre.

O, gentle reader, young perhaps, and inexperienced of this world, wonder not at this so great change! The heart is full, perhaps, of a pure and holy affection, nor can it die, even for an hour of sleep. May it never die but in the grave! Yet die it may, and leave thee blameless. The time may come when that bosom, now thy Elysium, will awaken not, with all its heaving beauty, one single passionate or adoring sigh. Those eyes, that now stream agitation and bliss into thy throbbing heart, may, on some not very distant day, be cold to thy imagination, as the distant and unheeded stars. That voice, now thrilling through every nerve, may fall on thy ear a disregarded sound. Other hopes, other fears, other troubles, may possess thee wholly—and that more than angel of Heaven seem to fade away into a shape of earth's most common clay. But here there was no change—no forgetfulness—no oblivion—no faithlessness to a holy trust. The melancholy man often saw his Hannah, and all his seven sweet children—now fair in life—now pale in death. Sometimes, perhaps, the sight, the sound—their smiles and their voices—disturbed him, till his heart quaked within him, and he wished that he too was dead. But God it was who had removed them from our earth—and was it possible to doubt that they were all in blessedness? Shed your tears over change from virtue to vice, happiness to misery; but weep not for those still, sad, mysterious processes by which gracious Nature alleviates the afflictions of our mortal lot, and enables us to endure the

life which the Lord our God hath given us. Erelong, husband and wife could bear to speak of those who were now no more seen; when the phantoms rose before them in the silence of the night, they all wore pleasant and approving countenances, and the beautiful family often came from Heaven to visit their father in his dreams. He did not wish, much less hope, in this life, for such happiness as had once been his—nor did Alice Gray, even for one hour, imagine that such happiness it was in her power to bestow. They knew each other's hearts—what they had suffered and survived; and, since the meridian of life and joy was gone, they were contented with the pensive twilight.

Look, there is a pretty Cottage—by name LEASIDE—one that might almost do for a painter—just sufficiently shaded by trees, and showing a new aspect every step you take, and each new aspect beautiful. There is, it is true, neither moss, nor lichens, nor weather-stains on the roof—but all is smooth, neat, trim, deep thatch, from rigging to eaves, with a picturesque elevated window covered with the same material, and all the walls white as snow. The whole building is at all times as fresh as if just washed by a vernal shower. Competence breathes from every lattice, and that porch has been reared more for ornament than defence, although, no doubt, it is useful both in March and November winds. Every field about it is like a garden, and yet the garden is brightly conspicuous amidst all the surrounding cultivation. The hedgerows are all clipped, for they have

grown there for many and many a year; and the shears were necessary to keep them down from shutting out the vista of the lovely vale. That is the dwelling of Adam Airlie the Elder. Happy old man! This life has gone uniformly well with him and his; yet, had it been otherwise, there is a power in his spirit that would have sustained the severest inflictions of Providence. His gratitude to God is something solemn and awful, and ever accompanied with a profound sense of his utter unworthiness of all the long-continued mercies vouchsafed to his family. His own happiness, prolonged to a great age, has not closed within his heart one source of pity or affection for his brethren of mankind. In his own guiltless conscience, guiltless before man, he yet feels incessantly the frailties of his nature, and is meek, humble, and penitent as the greatest sinner. He, his wife, an old faithful female servant, and an occasional grand-daughter, now form the whole household. His three sons have all prospered in the world. The eldest went abroad when a mere boy, and many fears went with him—a bold, adventurous, and somewhat reckless creature. But consideration came to him in a foreign climate, and tamed down his ardent mind to a thoughtful, not a selfish prudence. Twenty years he lived in India—and what a blessed day was the day of his return! Yet in the prime of life, by disease unbroken, and with a heart full to overflowing with all its old sacred affections, he came back to his father's lowly cottage, and wept as he crossed the threshold. His parents needed not any of his wealth; but they were

blamelessly proud, nevertheless, of his honest acquisitions —proud when he became a landholder in his native parish, and employed the sons of his old companions, and some of his old companions themselves, in the building of his unostentatious mansion, or in cultivating the wild but not unlovely moor, which was dear to him for the sake of the countless remembrances that clothed the bare banks of its lochs, and murmured in the little stream that ran among the pastoral braes. The new mansion is a couple of miles from his parental Cottage; but not a week, indeed seldom half that time, elapses, without a visit to that dear dwelling. They likewise not unfrequently visit him—for his wife is dear to them as a daughter of their own; and the ancient couple delight in the noise and laughter of his pretty flock. Yet the son understands perfectly well that the aged people love best their own roof—and that its familiar quiet is every day dearer to their habituated affections. Therefore he makes no parade of filial tenderness—forces nothing new upon them—is glad to see the uninterrupted tenor of their humble happiness; and if they are proud of him, which all the parish knows, so is there not a child within its bounds that does not know that Mr Airlie, the rich gentleman from India, loves his poor father and mother as tenderly as if he had never left their roof; and is prouder of them, too, than if they were clothed in fine raiment, and fared sumptuously every day. Mr Airlie of the Mount has his own seat in the gallery of the Kirk—his father, as an Elder, sits below the pulpit—but occasionally the pious and proud

son joins his mother in the pew, where he and his brothers sat long ago; and every Sabbath one or other of his children takes its place beside the venerated matron. The old man generally leaves the churchyard leaning on his Gilbert's arm—and although the sight has long been so common as to draw no attention, yet no doubt there is always an under and unconscious pleasure in many a mind witnessing the sacredness of the bond of blood. Now and then the old matron is prevailed upon, when the weather is bad and roads miry, to take a seat home in the carriage—but the Elder always prefers walking thither with his son, and he is stout and hale, although upwards of threescore and ten years.

Walter, the second son, is now a captain in the navy, having served for years before the mast. His mind is in his profession, and he is perpetually complaining of being unemployed—a ship—a ship, is still the burden of his song. But when at home—which he often is for weeks together—he attaches himself to all the ongoings of rural life, as devotedly as if a plougher of the soil instead of the sea. His mother wonders, with tears in her eyes, why, having a competency, he should still wish to provoke the dangers of the deep; and beseeches him sometimes to become a farmer in his native vale. And perhaps more improbable things have happened; for the captain, it is said, has fallen desperately in love with the daughter of the clergyman of a neighbouring parish, and the doctor will not give his consent to the marriage, unless he promise to live, if allowed, on shore. The

political state of Europe certainly seems at present favourable to the consummation of the wishes of all parties.

Of David, the third son, who has not heard, that has heard any thing of the pulpit eloquence of Scotland?—Should his life be spared, there can be no doubt that he will one day or other be Moderator of the General Assembly, perhaps Professor of Divinity in a College. Be that as it may, a better Christian never expounded the truths of the gospel, although some folks pretend to say that he is not evangelical. He is, however, beloved by the poor—the orphan and the widow; and his ministrations, powerful in the kirk to a devoutly listening congregation, is so too at the sick-bed, when only two or three are gathered around it, and when the dying man feels how a fellow-creature can, by scriptural aids, strengthen his trust in the mercy of his Maker.

Every year, on each birthday of their sons, the old people hold a festival—in May, in August, and at Christmas. The sailor alone looks disconsolate as a bachelor, but that reproach will be wiped away before autumn; and should God grant the cottagers a few more years, some new faces will yet smile upon the holydays; and there is in their unwithered hearts warm love enough for all that may join the party. We too—yes, gentle reader—we too shall be there—as we have often been during the last ten years—and you yourself will judge, from all you know of us, whether or no we have a heart to understand and enjoy such rare felicity.

But let us be off to the mountains, and endeavour to

interest our beloved reader in a Highland Cottage—in any one, taken at hap-hazard, from a hundred. You have been roaming all day among the mountains, and perhaps seen no house except at a dwindling distance. Probably you have wished not to see any house, but a ruined shieling—a deserted hut—or an unroofed and dilapidated shed for the outlying cattle of some remote farm. But now the sun has inflamed all the western heaven, and darkness will soon descend. There is now a muteness more stern and solemn than during unfaded daylight. List—the faint, far-off, subterranean sound of the bagpipe! Some old soldier, probably, playing a gathering or a coronach. The narrow dell widens and widens into a great glen, in which you just discern the blue gleam of a loch. The martial music is more distinctly heard—loud, fitful, fierce, like the trampling of men in battle. Where is the piper? In a cave, or within the Fairies' Knowe? At the door of a hut. His eyes were extinguished by ophthalmia, and there he sits, fronting the sunlight, stone-blind. Long silver hair flows down his broad shoulders, and you perceive that, when he rises, he will rear up a stately bulk. The music stops, and you hear the bleating of goats. There they come, prancing down the rocks, and stare upon the stranger. The old soldier turns himself towards the voice of the Sassenach, and, with the bold courtesy of the camp, bids him enter the hut. One minute's view has sufficed to imprint the scene for ever on the memory —a hut whose turf-walls and roof are incorporated with the living mountain, and seem not the work of man's

hand, but the casual architecture of some convulsion—the tumbling down of fragments from the mountain side by raging torrents, or a partial earthquake; for all the scenery about is torn to pieces—like the scattering of some wide ruin. The imagination dreams of the earliest days of our race, when men harboured, like the other creatures, in places provided by nature. But even here, there are visible traces of cultivation working in the spirit of a mountainous region—a few glades of the purest verdure opened out among the tall brackens, with a birch-tree or two dropped just where the eye of taste could have wished, had the painter planted the sapling, instead of the winds of heaven having wafted thither the seed—a small croft of barley, surrounded by a cairn-like wall, made up of stones cleared from the soil, and a patch of potatoe ground, neat almost as the garden that shows in a nook its fruit-bushes and a few flowers. All the blasts that ever blew must be unavailing against the briery rock that shelters the hut from the airt of storms; and the smoke may rise under its lee, unwavering on the windiest day. There is sweetness in all the air, and the glen is noiseless, except with the uncertain murmur of the now unswollen waterfalls. That is the croak of the raven sitting on his cliff halfway up Ben-Oura; and hark, the last belling of the red-deer, as the herd lies down in the mist among the last ridge of heather, blending with the shrubless stones, rocks, and cliffs that girdle the upper regions of the vast mountain.

Within the dimness of the hut you hear greetings in the Gaelic tongue, in a female voice; and when the eye

has by and by become able to endure the smoke, it discerns the household—the veteran's ancient dame—a young man that may be his son, or rather his grandson, but whom you soon know to be neither, with black matted locks, the keen eye, and the light limbs of the hunter—a young woman, his wife, suckling a child, and yet with a girlish look, as if but one year before her silken snood had been untied—and a lassie of ten years, who had brought home the goats, and now sits timidly in a nook eyeing the stranger. The low growl of the huge, brindled stag-hound had been hushed by a word on your first entrance, and the noble animal watches his master's eye, which he obeys in his freedom throughout all the forest-chase. A napkin is taken out of an old worm-eaten chest, and spread over a strangely-carved table, that seems to have belonged once to a place of pride; and the hungry and thirsty stranger scarcely knows which most to admire, the broad bannocks of barley-meal and the huge roll of butter, or the giant bottle, whose mouth exhales the strong savour of conquering Glenlivet. The board is spread—why not fall to and eat? First be thanks given to the Lord God Almighty. The blind man holds up his hand and prays in a low chanting voice, and then breaks bread for the lips of the stranger. On such an occasion is felt the sanctity of the meal shared by human beings brought accidentally together—the salt is sacred—and the hearth an altar.

No great travellers are we, yet have we seen something of this habitable globe. The Highlands of Scot-

land is but a small region, nor is its interior by any means so remote as the interior of Africa. Yet 'tis remote. The life of that very blind veteran might, in better hands than ours, make an interesting history. In his youth he had been a shepherd—a herdsman—a hunter—something even of a poet. For thirty years he had been a soldier—in many climates and many conflicts. Since first he bloodied his bayonet, how many of his comrades had been buried in heaps! Flung into trenches dug on the field of battle! How many famous captains had shone in the blaze of their fame—faded into the light of common day—died in obscurity, and been utterly forgotten! What fierce passions must have agitated the frame of that now calm old man! On what dreadful scenes, when forts and towns were taken by storm, must those eyes, now withered into nothing, have glared with all the fury of man's most wrathful soul! Now peace is with him for evermore. Nothing to speak of the din of battle, but his own pipes wailing or raging among the hollow of the mountains. In relation to his campaigning career, his present life is as the life of another state. The pageantry of war has all rolled off and away for ever; all its actions but phantoms now of a dimly-remembered dream. He thinks of his former self, as sergeant in the Black Watch, and almost imagines he beholds another man. In his long, long blindness, he has created another world to himself out of new voices—the voices of new generations, and of torrents thundering all year long round about his hut. Almost all the savage has been tamed within him, and an awful

religion falls deeper and deeper upon him, as he knows how he is nearing the grave. Often his whole mind is dim, for he is exceedingly old, and then he sees only fragments of his youthful life—the last forty years are as if they had never been—and he hears shouts and huzzas, that half a century ago rent the air with victory. He can still chant, in a hoarse broken voice, battle-hymns and dirges; and thus, strangely forgetful and strangely tenacious of the past, linked to this life by ties that only the mountaineer can know, and yet feeling himself on the brink of the next, Old Blind Donald Roy, the Giant of the Hut of the Three Torrents, will not scruple to quaff the "strong waters," till his mind is awakened—brightened—dimmed—darkened—and seemingly extinguished—till the sunrise again smites him, as he lies in a heap among the heather; and then he lifts up, unashamed and remorseless, that head, which, with its long quiet hairs, a painter might choose for the image of a saint about to become a martyr.

We leave old Donald asleep, and go with his son-in-law, Lewis of the light foot, and Maida the stag-hound, surnamed the Throttler,

> "Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trod,
> To his hills that encircle the sea."

We have been ascending mountain-range after mountain-range, before sunrise; and lo! night is gone, and nature rejoices in the day through all her solitudes. Still as death, yet as life cheerful—and unspeakable grandeur in the sudden revelation. Where is the wild-deer herd?—where, ask the keen eyes of Maida, is the

forest of antlers!—Lewis of the light-foot bounds before, with his long gun pointing towards the mists now gathered up to the summits of Benevis.

Nightfall—and we are once more at the Hut of the Three Torrents. Small Amy is grown familiar now, and, almost without being asked, sings us the choicest of her Gaelic airs—a few too of Lowland melody: all merry, yet all sad—if in smiles begun, ending in a shower—or at least a tender mist of tears. Heard'st thou ever such a syren as this Celtic child? Did we not always tell you that fairies were indeed realities of the twilight or moonlight world? And she is their Queen. Hark! what thunders of applause! The waterfall at the head of the great Corrie thunders *encore* with a hundred echoes. But the songs are over, and the small singer gone to her heather-bed. There is a Highland moon!—The shield of an unfallen archangel. There are not many stars—but those two—ay, that One, is sufficient to sustain the glory of the night. Be not alarmed at that low, wide, solemn, and melancholy sound. Runlets, torrents, rivers, lochs, and seas—reeds, heather, forests, caves, and cliffs, all are sound, sounding together a choral anthem.

Gracious heavens! what mistakes people have fallen into when writing about Solitude! A man leaves a town for a few months, and goes with his wife and family, and a travelling library, into some solitary glen. Friends are perpetually visiting him from afar, or the neighbouring gentry leaving their cards, while his servant-boy rides daily to the post-village for his letters

and newspapers. And call you that solitude? The whole world is with you, morning, noon, and night. But go by yourself, without book or friend, and live a month in this hut at the head of Glenevis. Go at dawn among the cliffs of yonder pine-forest, and wait there till night hangs her moon-lamp in heaven. Commune with your own soul, and be still. Let the images of departed years rise, phantom-like, of their own awful accord from the darkness of your memory, and pass away into the wood-gloom or the mountain-mist. Will conscience dread such spectres? Will you quake before them, and bow down your head on the mossy root of some old oak, and sob in the stern silence of the haunted place? Thoughts, feelings, passions, spectral deeds, will come rushing around your lair, as with the sound of the wings of innumerous birds—ay, many of them like birds of prey, to gnaw your very heart. How many duties undischarged! How many opportunities neglected! How many pleasures devoured! How many sins hugged! How many wickednesses perpetrated! The desert looks more grim—the heaven lowers—and the sun, like God's own eye, stares in upon your conscience!

But such is not the solitude of our beautiful young shepherd-girl of the Hut of the Three Torrents. Her soul is as clear, as calm as the pool pictured at times by the floating clouds that let fall their shadows through among the overhanging birch-trees. What harm could she ever do? What harm could she ever think? She may have wept—for there is sorrow without sin; may have wept even at her prayers—for there is

penitence free from guilt, and innocence itself often kneels in contrition. Down the long glen she accompanies the stream to the house of God—sings her psalms—and returns wearied to her heather-bed. She is, indeed, a solitary child; the eagle, and the raven, and the red-deer see that she is so—and echo knows it when from her airy cliff she repeats the happy creature's song. Her world is within this one glen. In this one glen she may live all her days—be wooed, won, wedded, buried. Buried—said we? Oh, why think of burial when gazing on that resplendent head? Interminable tracts of the shining day await her, the lonely darling of nature; nor dare Time ever eclipse the lustre of those wild-beaming eyes! Her beauty shall be immortal, like that of her country's fairies. So, Flower of the Wilderness, we wave towards thee a joyful—though an everlasting farewell.

Where are we now? There is not on this round green earth a lovelier Loch than Achray. About a mile above Loch Vennachar, and as we approach the Brigg of Turk, we arrive at the summit of an eminence, whence we descry the sudden and wide prospect of the windings of the river that issues from Loch Achray—and the Loch itself reposing—sleeping—dreaming on its pastoral, its sylvan bed. Achray, being interpreted, signifies the "Level Field," and gives its name to a delightful farm at the west end. On "that happy, rural seat of various view," could we lie all day long; and as all the beauty tends towards the west, each afternoon hour deepens and also brightens it into mellower splendour. Not to keep constantly seeing

the lovely Loch is indeed impossible—yet its still waters soothe the soul, without holding it away from the woods and cliffs, that, forming of themselves a perfect picture, are yet all united with the mountainous region of the setting sun. Many long years have elapsed—at our time of life ten are many—since we passed one delightful evening in the hospitable house that stands near the wooden bridge over the Teith, just wheeling into Loch Achray. What a wilderness of wooded rocks, containing a thousand little mossy glens, each large enough for a fairy's kingdom! Between and Loch Katrine is the Place of Roes—nor need the angler try to penetrate the underwood; for every shallow, every linn, every pool is overshaded by its own canopy, and the living fly and moth alone ever dip their wings in the chequered waters. Safe there are all the little singing birds, from hawk or glead—and it is indeed an Aviary in the wild. Pine-groves stand here and there amid the natural woods—and among their tall gloom the cushat sits crooning in beloved solitude, rarely startled by human footstep, and bearing at his own pleasure through the forest the sound of his flapping wings.

But let us rise from the greensward, and before we pace along the sweet shores of Loch Achray, for its nearest murmur is yet more than a mile off, turn away up from the Brigg of Turk into Glenfinglas. A strong mountain-torrent, in which a painter, even with the soul of Salvator Rosa, might find studies inexhaustible for years, tumbles on the left of a ravine, in which a small band of warriors might stop the march of a numerous

host. With what a loud voice it brawls through the silence, freshening the hazels, the birches, and the oaks, that in that perpetual spray need not the dew's refreshment. But the savage scene softens as you advance, and you come out of that sylvan prison into a plain of meadows and corn-fields, alive with the peaceful dwellings of industrious men. Here the bases of the mountains, and even their sides high up, are without heather—a rich sward, with here and there a deep bed of brackens, and a little sheep-sheltering grove. Skeletons of old trees of prodigious size lie covered with mosses and wild-flowers, or stand with their barkless trunks and white limbs unmoved when the tempest blows. Glenfinglas was anciently a deer-forest of the Kings of Scotland; but hunter's horn no more awakens the echoes of Benledi.

A more beautiful vale never inspired pastoral poet in Arcadia, nor did Sicilian shepherds of old ever pipe to each other for prize of oaten reed, in a lovelier nook than where yonder cottage stands, shaded, but scarcely sheltered, by a few birch-trees. It is in truth not a cottage—but a very SHIELING, part of the knoll adhering to the side of the mountain. Not another dwelling—even as small as itself—within a mile in any direction. Those goats, that seem to walk where there is no footing along the side of the cliff, go of themselves to be milked at evening to a house beyond the hill, without any barking dog to set them home. There are many footpaths, but all of sheep, except one leading through the coppice-wood to the distant kirk. The angler seldom disturbs those shallows, and the heron has them to him-

self, watching often with motionless neck all day long. Yet the Shieling is inhabited, and has been so by the same person for a good many years. You might look at it for hours, and yet see no one so much as moving to the door. But a little smoke hovers over it—very faint if it be smoke at all—and nothing else tells that within is life.

It is inhabited by a widow, who once was the happiest of wives, and lived far down the glen, where it is richly cultivated, in a house astir with many children. It so happened, that in the course of nature, without any extraordinary bereavements, she outlived all the household, except one, on whom fell the saddest affliction that can befall a human being—the utter loss of reason. For some years after the death of her husband, and all her other children, this son was her support; and there was no occasion to pity them in their poverty, where all were poor. Her natural cheerfulness never forsook her; and although fallen back in the world, and obliged in her age to live without many comforts she once had known, yet all the past gradually was softened into peace, and the widow and her son were in that shieling as happy as any family in the parish. He worked at all kinds of work without, and she sat spinning from morning to night within—a constant occupation, soothing to one before whose mind past times might otherwise have come too often, and that creates contentment by its undisturbed sameness and invisible progression. If not always at meals, the widow saw her son for an hour or two every night, and throughout the whole Sabbath-day. They

slept too under one roof; and she liked the stormy weather when the rains were on—for then he found some ingenious employment within the shieling, or cheered her with some book lent by a friend, or with the lively or plaintive music of his native hills. Sometimes, in her gratitude, she said that she was happier now than when she had so many other causes to be so; and when occasionally an acquaintance dropt in upon her, her face gave a welcome that spoke more than resignation; nor was she averse to partake the socialty of the other huts, and sat sedate among youthful merriment, when summer or winter festival came round, and poverty rejoiced in the riches of content and innocence.

But her trials, great as they had been, were not yet over; for this her only son was laid prostrate by fever—and, when it left his body, he survived hopelessly stricken in mind. His eyes, so clear and intelligent, were now fixed in idiocy, or rolled about unobservant of all objects living or dead. To him all weather seemed the same, and if suffered, he would have lain down like a creature void of understanding, in rain or on snow, nor been able to find his way back for many paces from the hut. As all thought and feeling had left him, so had speech, all but a moaning as of pain or wo, which none but a mother could bear to hear without shuddering—but she heard it during night as well as day, and only sometimes lifted up her eyes as in prayer to God. An offer was made to send him to a place where the afflicted were taken care of; but she beseeched charity for the first time for such alms as would enable her, along with the

earnings of her wheel, to keep her son in the shieling; and the means were given her from many quarters to do so decently, and with all the comforts that other eyes observed, but of which the poor object himself was insensible and unconscious. Henceforth it may almost be said, she never more saw the sun, nor heard the torrents roar. She went not to the kirk, but kept her Sabbath where the paralytic lay—and there she sung the lonely psalm, and said the lonely prayer, unheard in Heaven as many repining spirits would have thought —but it was not so; for in two years there came a meaning to his eyes, and he found a few words of imperfect speech, among which was that of "Mother." Oh! how her heart burned within her, to know that her face was at last recognized! To feel that her kiss was returned, and to see the first tear that trickled from eyes that long had ceased to weep! Day after day, the darkness that covered his brain grew less and less deep—to her that bewilderment gave the blessedness of hope; for her son now knew that he had an immortal soul, and in the evening joined faintly and feebly and erringly in prayer. For weeks afterwards he remembered only events and scenes long past and distant—and believed that his father, and all his brothers and sisters, were yet alive. He called upon them by their names to come and kiss him—on them, who had all long been buried in the dust. But his soul struggled itself into reason and remembrance—and he at last said, "Mother! did some accident befall me yesterday at my work down the glen? —I feel weak, and about to die!" The shadows of

death were indeed around him; but he lived to be told much of what had happened—and rendered up a perfectly unclouded spirit into the mercy of his Saviour. His mother felt that all her prayers had been granted in that one boon—and, when the coffin was borne away from the shieling, she remained in it with a friend, assured that in this world there could for her be no more grief. And there in that same shieling, now that years have gone by, she still lingers, visited as often as she wishes by her poor neighbours—for to the poor sorrow is a sacred thing—who, by turns, send one of their daughters to stay with her, and cheer a life that cannot be long, but that, end when it may, will be laid down without one impious misgiving, and in the humility of a Christian's faith.

The scene shifts of itself, and we are at the head of Glenetive. Who among all the Highland maidens that danced on the greenswards among the blooming heather on the mountains of Glenetive—who so fair as Flora, the only daughter of the King's Forester, and grandchild to the Bard famous for his songs of Fairies in the Hill of Peace, and the Mermaid-Queen in her Palace of Emerald floating far down beneath the foam-waves of the sea? And who, among all the Highland youth that went abroad to the bloody wars from the base of Benevis, to compare with Ranald of the Red-Cliff, whose sires had been soldiers for centuries, in the days of the dagger and Lochaber axe—stately in his strength amid the battle as the oak in a storm, but gentle in peace as the birch-tree, that whispers with all its leaves

to the slightest summer-breath? If their love was great when often fed at the light of each other's eyes, what was it when Ranald was far off among the sands of Egypt, and Flora left an orphan to pine away in her native glen? Beneath the shadow of the Pyramids he dreamt of Dalness and the deer forest, that was the dwelling of his love—and she, as she stood by the murmurs of that sea-loch, longed for the wings of the osprey, that she might flee away to the war-tents beyond the ocean, and be at rest!

But years—a few years—long and lingering as they might seem to loving hearts separated by the roar of seas—yet all too too short when 'tis thought how small a number lead from the cradle to the grave—brought Ranald and Flora once more into each other's arms. Alas! for the poor soldier! for never more was he to behold that face from which he kissed the trickling tears. Like many another gallant youth, he had lost his eyesight from the sharp burning sand—and was led to the shieling of his love like a wandering mendicant who obeys the hand of a child. Nor did his face bear that smile of resignation usually so affecting on the calm countenances of the blind. Seldom did he speak—and his sighs were deeper, longer, and more disturbed than those which almost any sorrow ever wrings from the young. Could it be that he groaned in remorse over some secret crime?

Happy—completely happy, would Flora have been to have tended him like a sister all his dark life long, or, like a daughter, to have sat beside the bed of one whose

hair was getting fast grey, long before its time. Almost all her relations were dead, and almost all her friends away to other glens. But he had returned, and blindness, for which there was no hope, must bind his steps for ever within little room. But they had been betrothed almost from her childhood, and would she—if he desired it—fear to become his wife now, shrouded as he was, now and for ever in the helpless dark? From his lips, however, her maidenly modesty required that the words should come; nor could she sometimes help wondering, in half-upbraiding sorrow, that Ranald joyed not in his great affliction to claim her for his wife. Poor were they to be sure—yet not so poor as to leave life without its comforts; and in every glen of her native Highlands, were there not worthy families far poorer than they? But weeks, months, passed on, and Ranald remained in a neighbouring hut, shunning the sunshine, and moaning, it was said, when he thought none were near, both night and day. Sometimes he had been overheard muttering to himself lamentable words—and, blind as his eyes were to all the objects of the real world, it was rumoured up and down the glen, that he saw visions of woful events about to befall one whom he loved.

One midnight he found his way, unguided, like a man walking in his sleep—but although in a hideous trance, he was yet broad awake—to the hut where Flora dwelt, and called on her, in a dirge-like voice, to speak a few words with him ere he died. They sat down together among the heather, on the very spot where the farewell embrace had been given the morning he went

away to the wars; and Flora's heart died within her, when he told her that the Curse under which his forefathers had suffered, had fallen upon him; and that he had seen his wraith pass by in a shroud, and heard a voice whisper the very day he was to die.

And was it Ranald of the Red-Cliff, the bravest of the brave, that thus shuddered in the fear of death like a felon at the tolling of the great prison-bell? Ay, death is dreadful when foreseen by a ghastly superstition. He felt the shroud already bound round his limbs and body with gentle folds, beyond the power of a giant to burst; and day and night the same vision yawned before him—an open grave in the corner of the hill burial-ground without any kirk.

Flora knew that his days were indeed numbered; for when had he ever been afraid of death—and could his spirit have quailed thus under a mere common dream? Soon was she to be all alone in this world; yet when Ranald should die, she felt that her own days would not be many, and there was sudden and strong comfort in the belief that they would be buried in one grave.

Such were her words to the dying man; and all at once he took her in his arms, and asked her "If she had no fears of the narrow house?" His whole nature seemed to undergo a change under the calm voice of her reply; and he said, "Dost thou fear not then, my Flora, to hear the words of doom?" "Blessed will they be, if in death we be not disunited." "Thou too, my wife—for my wife thou now art on earth, and mayest be so in heaven—thou too, Flora, wert seen shrouded in that

apparition." It was a gentle and gracious summer night—so clear, that the shepherds on the hills were scarcely sensible of the morning's dawn. And there, at earliest daylight, were Ranald and Flora found, on the greensward, among the tall heather, lying side by side, with their calm faces up to heaven, and never more to smile or weep in this mortal world.

AN HOUR'S TALK ABOUT POETRY

OURS is a poetical age; but has it produced one Great Poem? Not one.

Just look at them for a moment. There is the Pleasures of Memory—an elegant, graceful, beautiful, pensive, and pathetic poem, which it does one's eyes good to gaze on—one's ears good to listen to—one's very fingers good to touch, so smooth is the versification and the wire-wove paper. Never will the Pleasures of Memory be forgotten till the world is in its dotage. But is it a Great Poem? About as much so as an ant-hill, prettily grass-grown and leaf-strewn, is a mountain purple with heather and golden with woods. It is a symmetrical erection—in the shape of a cone—and the apex points heavenwards; but 'tis not a sky-piercer. You take it at a hop—and pursue your journey. Yet it endures. For the rains and the dews, and the airs and the sunshine, love the fairy knoll, and there it greens and blossoms delicately and delightfully; you hardly know whether a work of art or a work of nature.

Then, there is the poetry of Crabbe. We hear it is not very popular. If so, then neither is human life. For

of all our poets, he has most skilfully woven the web and woven the woof of all his compositions with the materials of human life—homespun indeed; but though often coarse, always strong—and though set to plain patterns, yet not unfrequently exceeding fine is the old weaver's workmanship. Ay—hold up the product of his loom between your eye and the light, and it glows and glimmers like the peacock's back or the breast of the rainbow. Sometimes it seems to be but of the "hodden grey;" when sunbeam or shadow smites it, and lo! it is burnished like the regal purple. But did the Boroughmonger ever produce a Great Poem? You might as well ask if he built St Paul's.

Breathes not the man with a more poetical temperament than Bowles. No wonder that his old eyes are still so lustrous; for they possess the sacred gift of beautifying creation, by shedding over it the charm of melancholy. "Pleasant but mournful to the soul is the memory of joys that are past"—is the text we should choose were we about to preach on his genius. No vain repinings, no idle regrets, does his spirit now breathe over the still receding Past. But time-sanctified are all the shows that arise before his pensive imagination; and the common light of day, once gone, in his poetry seems to shine as if it had all been dying sunset or moonlight, or the new-born dawn. His human sensibilities are so fine as to be in themselves poetical; and his poetical aspirations so delicate as to be felt always human. Hence his Sonnets have been dear to poets—having in them "more than meets the ear"—spiritual

breathings that hang around the words like light around fair flowers; and hence, too, have they been beloved by all natural hearts who, having not the "faculty divine," have yet the "vision"—that is, the power of seeing and of hearing the sights and the sounds which genius alone can awaken, bringing them from afar out of the dust and dimness of evanishment.

Mr Bowles has been a poet for good fifty years; and if his genius do not burn quite so bright as it did some lustres bygone—yet we do not say there is any abatement even of its brightness: it shines with a mellower and also with a more cheerful light. Long ago, he was perhaps rather too pensive—too melancholy—too pathetic—too wo-begone—in too great bereavement. Like the nightingale, he sung with a thorn at his breast—from which one wondered the point had not been broken off by perpetual pressure. Yet, though rather monotonous, his strains were most musical as well as melancholy; feeling was often relieved by fancy; and one dreamed, in listening to his elegies, and hymns, and sonnets, of moonlit rivers flowing through hoary woods, and of the yellow sands of dim-imaged seas murmuring round "the shores of old Romance." A fine enthusiasm too was his—in those youthful years—inspired by the poetry of Greece and Rome; and in some of his happiest inspirations there was a delightful and original union—to be found nowhere else that we can remember—of the spirit of that ancient song—the pure classical spirit that murmured by the banks of the Eurotas and Ilissus with that of our own

poetry, that like a noble Naiad dwells in the "clear well of English undefiled." In almost all his strains you felt the scholar; but his was no affected or pedantic scholarship—intrusive most when least required; but the growth of a consummate classical education, of which the career was not inglorious among the towers of Oxford. Bowles was a pupil of the Wartons—Joe and Tom—God bless their souls!—and his name may be joined, not unworthily, with theirs—and with Mason's, and Gray's, and Collins'—academics all; the works of them all showing a delicate and exquisite colouring of classical art, enriching their own English nature. Bowles's muse is always loath to forget—wherever she roam or linger—Winchester and Oxford—the Itchin and the Isis. None educated in those delightful and divine haunts will ever forget them, who can read Homer, and Pindar, and Sophocles, and Theocritus, and Bion, and Moschus, in the original; Rhedicyna's ungrateful or renegade sons are those alone who pursued their poetical studies—in translations. They never knew the nature of the true old Greek fire.

But has Bowles written a Great Poem? If he has, publish it, and we shall make him a Bishop.

What shall we say of the Pleasures of Hope? That the harp from which that music breathed, was an Æolian harp placed in the window of a high hall, to catch airs from heaven when heaven was glad, as well she might be with such moon and such stars, and streamering half the region with a magnificent aurora borealis. Now the

music deepens into a majestic march—now it swells into a holy hymn—and now it dies away elegiac-like, as if mourning over a tomb. Vague, indefinite, uncertain dream-like, and visionary all; but never else than beautiful; and ever and anon, we know not why, sublime. It ceases in the hush of night—and we awaken as if from a dream. Is it not even so?—In his youth Campbell lived where "distant isles could hear the loud Corbrechtan roar;" and sometimes his poetry is like that whirlpool—the sound as of the wheels of many chariots. Yes, happy was it for him that he had liberty to roam along the many-based, hollow-rumbling western coast of that unaccountable county Argyleshire. The sea-roar cultivated his naturally fine musical ear, and it sank too into his heart. Hence is his prime Poem bright with hope as is the sunny sea when sailors' sweethearts on the shore are looking out for ships; and from a foreign station down comes the fleet before the wind, and the very shells beneath their footsteps seem to sing for joy. As for Gertrude of Wyoming, we love her as if she were our own only daughter—filling our life with bliss, and then leaving it desolate. Even now we see her ghost gliding through those giant woods! As for Lochiel's Warning, there was heard the voice of the Last of the Seers. The Second Sight is now extinguished in the Highland glooms—the Lament wails no more,

"That man may not hide what God would reveal!"

The Navy owes much to "Ye mariners of England." Sheer hulks often seemed ships till that strain

arose—but ever since in our imagination have they brightened the roaring ocean. And dare we say, after that, that Campbell has never written a Great Poem? Yes—in the face even of the Metropolitan!

It was said many long years ago in the Edinburgh Review, that none but maudlin milliners and sentimental ensigns supposed that James Montgomery was a poet. Then is Maga a maudlin milliner—and Christopher North a sentimental ensign. We once called Montgomery a Moravian; and though he assures us that we were mistaken, yet having made an assertion, we always stick to it, and therefore he must remain a Moravian, if not in his own belief, yet in ours. Of all religious sects, the Moravians are the most simple-minded, pure-hearted, and high-souled — and these qualities shine serenely in the Pelican Island. In earnestness and fervour, that poem is by few or none excelled; it is embalmed in sincerity, and therefore shall fade not away, neither shall it moulder—not even although exposed to the air, and blow the air ever so rudely through time's mutations. Not that it is a mummy. Say rather a fair form laid asleep in immortality—its face wearing, day and night, summer and winter, look at it when you will, a saintly—a celestial smile. That is a true image; but is the Pelican Island a Great Poem? We pause not for a reply.

Lyrical Poetry, we opine, hath many branches—and one of them "beautiful exceedingly" with bud, blossom, and fruit of balm and brightness, round which is ever heard the murmur of bees and of birds, hangs trailingly

along the mossy greensward when the air is calm, and ever and anon, when blow the fitful breezes, it is uplifted in the sunshine, and glows wavingly aloft, as if it belonged even to the loftiest region of the Tree which is Amaranth That is a fanciful, perhaps foolish form of expression, employed at present to signify Song-writing. Now, of all the song-writers that ever warbled, or chanted, or sung, the best, in our estimation, is verily none other than Thomas Moore. True that Robert Burns has indited many songs that slip into the heart, just like light, no one knows how, filling its chambers sweetly and silently, and leaving it nothing more to desire for perfect contentment. Or let us say, sometimes when he sings, it is like listening to a linnet in the broom, a blackbird in the brake, a laverock in the sky. They sing in the fulness of their joy, as nature teaches them—and so did he; and the man, woman, or child, who is delighted not with such singing, be their virtues what they may, must never hope to be in Heaven. Gracious Providence placed Burns in the midst of the sources of Lyrical Poetry—when he was born a Scottish peasant. Now, Moore is an Irishman, and was born in Dublin. Moore is a Greek scholar, and translated—after a fashion—Anacreon. And Moore has lived much in towns and cities—and in that society which will suffer none else to be called good. Some advantages he has enjoyed which Burns never did—but then how many disadvantages has he undergone, from which the Ayrshire Ploughman, in the bondage of his poverty, was free! You see all that at a single glance into their poetry.

But all in humble life is not high—all in high life is not low; and there is as much to guard against in hovel as in hall—in "auld clay-bigging" as in marble palace. Burns sometimes wrote like a mere boor—Moore has too often written like a mere man of fashion. But take them both at their best—and both are inimitable. Both are national poets—and who shall say, that if Moore had been born and bred a peasant, as Burns was, and if Ireland had been such a land of knowledge, and virtue, and religion as Scotland is—and surely, without offence, we may say that it never was, and never will be—though we love the Green Island well—that with his fine fancy, warm heart, and exquisite sensibilities, he might not have been as natural a lyrist as Burns; while, take him as he is, who can deny that in richness, in variety, in grace, and in the power of art, he is superior to the ploughman. Of Lallah Rookh and the Loves of the Angels, we defy you to read a page without admiration; but the question recurs, and it is easily answered, we need not say in the negative, did Moore ever write a Great Poem?

Let us make a tour of the Lakes. Rydal Mount! Wordsworth! The Bard! Here is the man who has devoted his whole life to poetry. It is his profession. He is a poet just as his brother is a clergyman. He is the Head of the Lake School, just as his brother is Master of Trinity. Nothing in this life and in this world has he had to do, beneath sun, moon, and stars, but

> "To murmur by the living brooks
> A music sweeter than their own."

What has been the result? Seven volumes (oh! why not seven more?) of poetry, as beautiful as ever charmed the ears of Pan and of Apollo. The earth—the middle air—the sky—the heaven—the heart, mind, and soul of man—are "the haunt and main region of his song." In describing external nature as she is, no poet perhaps has excelled Wordsworth—not even Thomson; in embuing her and making her pregnant with spiritualities, till the mighty mother teems with "beauty far more beauteous" than she had ever rejoiced in till such communion—he excels all the brotherhood. Therein lies his especial glory, and therein the immortal evidences of the might of his creative imagination. All men at times "muse on nature with a poet's eye,"—but Wordsworth ever—and his soul has grown more and more religious from such worship. Every rock is an altar—every grove a shrine. We fear that there will be sectarians even in this Natural Religion till the end of time. But he is the High Priest of Nature—or, to use his own words, or nearly so, he is the High Priest "in the metropolitan temple built in the heart of mighty poets." But has he—even he—ever written a Great Poem? If he has—it is not the Excursion. Nay, the Excursion is not a Poem. It is a Series of Poems, all swimming in the light of poetry; some of them sweet and simple, some elegant and graceful, some beautiful and most lovely, some of "strength and state," some majestic, some magnificent, some sublime. But though it has an opening, it has no beginning; you can discover the middle only by the numerals on

the page; and the most serious apprehensions have been very generally entertained that it has no end. While Pedlar, Poet, and Solitary breathe the vital air, may the Excursion, stop where it will, be renewed; and as in its present shape it comprehends but a Three Days' Walk, we have but to think of an Excursion of three weeks, three months, or three years, to have some idea of Eternity. Then the life of man is not always limited to the term of threescore and ten years. What a Journal might it prove at last! Poetry in profusion till the land overflowed; but whether in one volume, as now, or in fifty, in future, not a Great Poem—nay, not a Poem at all—nor ever to be so esteemed, till the principles on which Great Poets build the lofty rhyme are exploded, and the very names of Art and Science smothered and lost in the bosom of Nature from which they arose.

Let the dullest clod that ever vegetated, provided only he be alive and hear, be shut up in a room with Coleridge, or in a wood, and subjected for a few minutes to the ethereal influence of that wonderful man's monologue, and he will begin to believe himself a Poet. The barren wilderness may not blossom like the rose, but it will seem, or rather feel to do so, under the lustre of an imagination exhaustless as the sun. You may have seen perhaps rocks suddenly so glorified by sunlight with colours manifold, that the bees seek them, deluded by the show of flowers. The sun, you know, does not always show his orb even in the daytime—and people are often ignorant of his place in the firmament. But he

keeps shining away at his leisure, as you would know were he to suffer eclipse. Perhaps he—the sun—is at no other time a more delightful luminary than when he is pleased to dispense his influence through a general haze, or mist—softening all the day till meridian is almost like the afternoon, and the grove, anticipating gloaming, bursts into "dance and minstrelsy" ere the god go down into the sea. Clouds too become him well—whether thin and fleecy and braided, or piled up all round about him castle-wise and cathedral-fashion, to say nothing of temples and other metropolitan structures; nor is it reasonable to find fault with him, when, as naked as the hour he was born, "he flames on the forehead of the morning sky." The grandeur too of his appearance on setting, has become quite proverbial. Now in all this he resembles Coleridge. It is easy to talk—not very difficult to speechify—hard to speak; but to "discourse" is a gift rarely bestowed by Heaven on mortal man. Coleridge has it in perfection. While he is discoursing, the world loses all its commonplaces, and you and your wife imagine yourself Adam and Eve listening to the affable archangel Raphael in the Garden of Eden. You would no more dream of wishing him to be mute for awhile, than you would a river that "imposes silence with a stilly sound." Whether you understand two consecutive sentences, we shall not stop too curiously to enquire; but you do something better, you feel the whole just like any other divine music. And 'tis your own fault if you do not

"A wiser and a better man arise to-morrow's morn."

Reason is said to be one faculty, and Imagination another—but there cannot be a grosser mistake; they are one and indivisible; only in most cases they live like cat and dog, in mutual worrying, or haply sue for a divorce; whereas in the case of Coleridge they are one spirit as well as one flesh, and keep billing and cooing in a perpetual honey-moon. Then his mind is learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, as well as the Greeks and Romans; and though we have heard simpletons say that he knows nothing of science, we have heard him on chemistry puzzle Sir Humphrey Davy—and prove to his own entire satisfaction, that Leibnitz and Newton, though good men, were but indifferent astronomers. Besides, he thinks nothing of inventing a new science, with a complete nomenclature, in a twinkling—and should you seem sluggish of apprehension, he endows you with an additional sense or two, over and above the usual seven, till you are no longer at a loss, be it even to scent the music of fragrance, or to hear the smell of a balmy piece of poetry. All the faculties, both of soul and sense, seem amicably to interchange their functions and their provinces; and you fear not that the dream may dissolve, persuaded that you are in a future state of permanent enjoyment. Nor are we now using any exaggeration; for if you will but think how unutterably dull are all the ordinary sayings and doings of this life, spent as it is with ordinary people, you may imagine how in sweet delirium you may be robbed of yourself by a seraphic tongue that has fed since first it lisped on "honey-dew," and by lips that

have "breathed the air of Paradise," and learned a seraphic language, which, all the while that it is English, is as grand as Greek and as soft as Italian. We only know this, that Coleridge is the alchymist that in his crucible melts down hours to moments—and lo! diamonds sprinkled on a plate of gold.

What a world would this be were all its inhabitants to fiddle like Paganini, ride like Ducrow, discourse like Coleridge, and do every thing else in a style of equal perfection! But pray, how does the man write poetry with a pen upon paper, who thus is perpetually pouring it from his inspired lips? Read the Ancient Mariner, the Nightingale, and Genevieve. In the first, you shudder at the superstition of the sea—in the second, you thrill with the melodies of the woods—in the third, earth is like heaven;—for you are made to feel that

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of Love,
> And feed his sacred flame!"

Has Coleridge, then, ever written a Great Poem? No; for besides the Regions of the Fair, the Wild, and the Wonderful, there is another up to which his wing might not soar; though the plumes are strong as soft. But why should he who loveth to take "the wings of a dove that he may flee away" to the bosom of beauty, though there never for a moment to be at rest—why should he, like an eagle, soar into the storms that roll above this visible diurnal sphere in peals of perpetual thunder?

Wordsworth, somewhere or other, remonstrates, rather

angrily, with the Public, against her obstinate ignorance shown in persisting to put into one class himself, Coleridge, and Southey, as birds of a feather, that not only flock together but warble the same sort of song. But he elsewhere tells us that he and Coleridge hold the same principles in the Art Poetical; and among his Lyrical Ballads he admitted the three finest compositions of his illustrious Compeer. The Public, therefore, is not to blame in taking him at his word, even if she had discerned no family likeness in their genius. Southey certainly resembles Wordsworth less than Coleridge does; but he lives at Keswick, which is but some dozen miles from Rydal, and perhaps with an unphilosophical though pensive Public that link of connexion should be allowed to be sufficient, even were there no other less patent and material than the Macadamized turnpike road. But true it is and of verity, that Southey, among our living Poets, stands aloof and "alone in his glory;" for he alone of them all has adventured to illustrate, in Poems of magnitude, the different characters, customs, and manners of nations. Joan of Arc is an English and French story—Thalaba, Arabian—Kehama, Indian —Madoc, Welsh and American—and Roderick, Spanish and Moorish; nor would it be easy to say (setting aside the first, which was a very youthful work) in which of these noble Poems Mr Southey has most successfully performed an achievement entirely beyond the power of any but the highest genius. In Madoc, and especially in Roderick, he has relied on the truth of nature—as it is seen in the history of great national

transactions and events. In Thalaba and in Kehama, though in them, too, he has brought to bear an almost boundless lore, he follows the leading of Fancy and Imagination, and walks in a world of wonders. Seldom, if ever, has one and the same Poet exhibited such power in such different kinds of Poetry—in Truth a Master, and in Fiction a Magician.

It is easy to assert that he draws on his vast stores of knowledge gathered from books—and that we have but to look at the multifarious accumulation of notes appended to his great Poems to see that they are not Inventions. The materials of poetry indeed are there—often the raw materials—seldom more; but the Imagination that moulded them into beautiful, or magnificent, or wondrous shapes, is all his own—and has shown itself most creative. Southey never was among the Arabians nor Hindoos, and therefore had to trust to travellers. But had he not been a Poet he might have read till he was blind, nor ever seen

> "The palm-grove inlanded amid the waste,"

where with Oneiza in her Father's Tent

> "How happily the years of Thalaba went by!"

In what guidance but that of his own genius did he descend with the Destroyer into the Domdaniel Caves? And who showed him the Swerga's Bowers of Bliss? Who built for him with all its palaces that submarine City of the Dead, safe in its far-down silence from the superficial thunder of the sea? The greatness as well as the originality of Southey's genius is seen in the

conception of every one of his Five Chief Works—with the exception of Joan of Arc, which was written in very early youth, and is chiefly distinguished by a fine enthusiasm. They are one and all National Poems—wonderfully true to the customs and characters of the inhabitants of the countries in which are laid the scenes of all their various adventures and enterprises—and the Poet has entirely succeeded in investing with an individual interest each representative of a race. Thalaba is a true Arab—Madoc a true Briton—King Roderick indeed the Last of the Goths. Kehama is a personage whom we can be made to imagine only in Hindostan. Sir Walter confined himself in his poetry to Scotland—except in Rokeby—and his might then went not with him across the Border; though in his novels and romances he was at home when abroad—and nowhere else more gloriously than with Saladin in the Desert. Lalla Rookh is full of brilliant poetry; and one of the series—the Fire-Worshippers—is Moore's highest effort; but the whole is too elaborately Oriental—and often in pure weariness of all that accumulation of the gorgeous imagery of the East, we shut up the false glitter, and thank Heaven that we are in one of the bleakest and barest corners of the West. But Southey's magic is more potent—and he was privileged to exclaim—

> "Come, listen to a tale of times of old!
> Come, for ye know me. I am he who framed
> Of Thalaba the wild and wondrous song.
> Come listen to my lay, and ye shall hear
> How Madoc from the shores of Britain spread
> The adventurous sail, explored the ocean path,

And quell'd barbaric power, and overthrew
The bloody altars of idolatry,
And planted on its fanes triumphantly
The Cross of Christ. Come, listen to my lay."

Of all his chief Poems the conception and the execution are original; in much faulty and imperfect both; but bearing throughout the impress of original power; and breathing a moral charm, in the midst of the wildest and sometimes even extravagant imaginings, that shall preserve them for ever from oblivion, embalming them in the spirit of delight and of love. Fairy Tales—or tales of witchcraft and enchantment, seldom stir the holiest and deepest feelings of the heart; but Thalaba and Kehama do so; "the still sad music of humanity" is ever with us among all most wonderful and wild; and of all the spells, and charms, and talismans that are seen working strange effects before our eyes, the strongest are ever felt to be Piety and Virtue. What exquisite pictures of domestic affection and bliss! what sanctity and devotion! Meek as a child is Innocence in Southey's poetry, but mightier than any giant. Whether matron or maid, mother or daughter—in joy or sorrow—as they appear before us, doing or suffering, "beautiful and dutiful," with Faith, Hope and Charity their guardian angels, nor Fear ever once crossing their path! We feel, in perusing such pictures—"Purity! thy name is woman!" and are not these Great Poems? We are silent. But should you answer "yes," from us in our present mood you shall receive no contradiction.

The transition always seems to us we scarcely know

why, as natural as delightful from Southey to Scott. They alone of all the poets of the day have produced poems in which are pictured and narrated, epicly, national characters, and events, and actions, and catastrophes. Southey has heroically invaded foreign countries; Scott as heroically brought his power to bear on his own people; and both have achieved immortal triumphs. But Scotland is proud of her great national minstrel—and as long as she is Scotland, will wash and warm the laurels round his brow, with rains and winds that will for ever keep brightening their glossy verdure. Whereas England, ungrateful ever to her men of genius, already often forgets the poetry of Southey; while Little Britain abuses his patriotism in his politics. The truth is, that Scotland had forgotten her own history till Sir Walter burnished it all up till it glowed again—it is hard to say whether in his poetry or in his prose the brightest—and the past became the present. We know now the character of our own people as it showed itself in war and peace—in palace, castle, hall, hut, hovel, and shieling—through centuries of advancing civilization, from the time when Edinburgh was first ycleped Auld Reekie, down to the period when the bright idea first occurred to her inhabitants to call her the Modern Athens. This he has effected by means of about one hundred volumes, each exhibiting to the life about fifty characters, and each character not only an individual in himself or herself, but the representative—so we offer to prove if you be sceptical—of a distinct class or order of human beings, from the Monarch to the Mendicant, from the Queen to

the Gipsy, from the Bruce to the Moniplies, from Mary Stuart to Jenny Dennisoun. We shall never say that Scott is Shakspeare; but we shall say that he has conceived and created—you know the meaning of these words—as many characters—real living flesh-and-blood human beings—naturally, truly, and consistently, as Shakspeare; who, always transcendently great in pictures of the passions—out of their range, which surely does not comprehend all rational being—was—nay, do not threaten to murder us—not seldom an imperfect delineator of human life. All the world believed that Sir Walter had not only exhausted his own genius in his poetry, but that he had exhausted all the matter of Scottish life—he and Burns together—and that no more ground unturned-up lay on this side of the Tweed. Perhaps he thought so too for a while—and shared in the general and natural delusion. But one morning before breakfast it occurred to him, that in all his poetry he had done little or nothing—though more for Scotland than any other of her poets—except the Ploughman—and that it would not be much amiss to commence a New Century of Inventions. Hence the Prose Tales — Novels — and Romances — fresh floods of light pouring all over Scotland—and occasionally illumining England, France, and Germany, and even Palestine—whatever land had been ennobled by Scottish enterprise, genius, valour, and virtue.

Up to the era of Sir Walter, living people had some vague, general, indistinct notions about dead people mouldering away to nothing centuries ago, in regular

kirkyards and chance burial-places, "'mang muirs and mosses many O," somewhere or other in that difficultly-distinguished and very debatable district called the Borders. All at once he touched their tombs with a divining rod, and the turf streamed out ghosts, some in woodmen's dresses—most in warrior's mail: green archers leapt forth with yew-bows and quivers—and giants stalked shaking spears. The grey chronicler smiled; and, taking up his pen, wrote in lines of light the annals of the chivalrous and heroic days of auld feudal Scotland. The nation then, for the first time, knew the character of its ancestors; for those were not spectres—not they indeed—nor phantoms of the brain—but gaunt flesh and blood, or glad and glorious;—base-born cottage churls of the olden time, because Scottish, became familiar to the love of the nation's heart, and so to its pride did the high-born lineage of palace-kings. The worst of Sir Walter is, that he has *harried* all Scotland. Never was there such a freebooter. He harries all men's cattle—kills themselves off hand, and makes bonfires of their castles. Thus has he disturbed and illuminated all the land as with the blazes of a million beacons. Lakes lie with their islands distinct by midnight as by mid-day; wide woods glow gloriously in the gloom; and by the stormy splendour you even see ships, with all sails set, far at sea. His favourite themes in prose or numerous verse, are still "Knights and Lords and mighty Earls," and their Lady-loves, chiefly Scottish—of kings that fought for fame or freedom—of fatal Flodden and bright Bannockburn—of the DELIVERER. If

that be not national to the teeth, Homer was no Ionian, Tyrtæus not sprung from Sparta, and Christopher North a Cockney. Let Abbotsford, then, be cognomed by those that choose it, the Ariosto of the North—we shall continue to call him plain Sir Walter.

Now, we beg leave to decline answering our own question—has he ever written a Great Poem? We do not care one straw whether he has or not; for he has done this—he has exhibited human life in a greater variety of forms and lights, all definite and distinct, than any other man whose name has reached our ears; and therefore, without fear or trembling, we tell the world to its face, that he is, out of all sight, the greatest genius of the age, not forgetting Goethe, the Devil, and Dr Faustus.

"What? Scott a greater genius than Byron!" Yes—beyond compare. Byron had a vivid and strong, but not a wide, imagination. He saw things as they are, occasionally standing prominently and boldly out from the flat surface of this world; and in general, when his soul was up, he described them with a master's might. We speak now of the external world—of nature and of art. Now observe how he dealt with nature. In his early poems he betrayed no passionate love of nature, though we do not doubt that he felt it; and even in the first two cantos of Childe Harold he was an unfrequent and no very devout worshipper at her shrine. We are not blaming his lukewarmness; but simply stating a fact. He had something else to think of, it would appear; and proved himself a poet. But in the third canto,

"a change came over the spirit of his dream," and he "babbled o' green fields," floods, and mountains. Unfortunately, however, for his originality, that canto is almost a cento—his model being Wordsworth. His merit, whatever it may be, is limited therefore to that of imitation. And observe, the imitation is not merely occasional or verbal; but all the descriptions are conceived in the spirit of Wordsworth, coloured by it and shaped—from it they live, and breathe, and have their being; and that so entirely, that had the Excursion and Lyrical Ballads never been, neither had any composition at all resembling, either in conception or execution, the third canto of Childe Harold. His soul, however, having been awakened by the inspiration of the Bard of Nature, never afterwards fell asleep, nor got drowsy over her beauties or glories; and much fine description pervades most of his subsequent works. He afterwards made much of what he saw his own—and even described it after his own fashion; but a greater in that domain was his instructor and guide—nor in his noblest efforts did he ever make any close approach to those inspired passages, which he had manifestly set as models before his imagination. With all the fair and great objects in the world of art, again, Byron dealt like a poet of original genius. They themselves, and not descriptions of them, kindled it up; and thus "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," do almost entirely compose the fourth canto, which is worth, ten times over, all the rest. The impetuosity of his career is astonishing; never for a moment does his wing flag; ever and anon he stoops but

to soar again with a more majestic sweep; and you see how he glories in his flight—that he is proud as Lucifer. The first two cantos are frequently cold, cumbrous, stiff, heavy, and dull; and, with the exception of perhaps a dozen stanzas, and these far from being of first-rate excellence, they are found wofully wanting in the true fire. Many passages are but the baldest prose. Byron, after all, was right in thinking—at first—but poorly of these cantos; and so was the friend, not Mr Hobhouse, who threw cold water upon them in manuscript. True, they "made a prodigious sensation," but bitter-bad stuff has often done that; while often unheeded or unheard has been an angel's voice. Had they been suffered to stand alone, long ere now had they been pretty well forgotten; and had they been followed by other two cantos no better than themselves, then had the whole four in good time been most certainly damned. But, fortunately, the poet, in his pride, felt himself pledged to proceed; and proceed he did in a superior style; borrowing, stealing, and robbing, with a face of aristocratic assurance that must have amazed the plundered; but intermingling with the spoil riches fairly won by his own genius from the exhaustless treasury of nature, who loved her wayward, her wicked, and her wondrous son. Is Childe Harold, then, a Great Poem? What! with one half of it little above mediocrity, one quarter of it not original in conception, and in execution swarming with faults, and the remainder glorious? As for his tales—the Giaour, Corsair, Lara, Bride of Abydos, Siege of Corinth, and so forth—they are all spirited, energetic, and pas-

sionate performances—sometimes nobly and sometimes meanly versified—but displaying neither originality nor fertility of invention, and assuredly no wide range either of feeling or of thought, though over that range a supreme dominion. Some of his dramas are magnificent—and in many of his smaller poems, pathos and beauty overflow. Don Juan exhibits almost every kind of talent; and in it the degradation of poetry is perfect.

But there is another glory belonging to this age, and almost to this age alone of our poetry—the glory of Female Genius. We have heard and seen it seriously argued whether or not women are equal to men; as if there could be a moment's doubt in any mind unbesotted by sex, that they are infinitely superior; not in understanding, thank Heaven, nor in intellect, but in all other "impulses of soul and sense" that dignify and adorn human beings, and make them worthy of living on this delightful earth. Men for the most part are such worthless wretches, that we wonder how women condescend to allow the world to be carried on; and we attribute that phenomenon solely to the hallowed yearnings of maternal affection, which breathes as strongly in maid as in matron, and may be beautifully seen in the child fondling its doll in its blissful bosom. Philoprogenitiveness! But not to pursue that interesting speculation, suffice it for the present to say, that so far from having no souls—a whim of Mahomet's, who thought but of their bodies—women are the sole spiritual beings that walk the earth not unseen; they alone, without pursuing a complicated and scientific system of deception and

hypocrisy, are privileged from on high to write poetry. We—men we mean—may affect a virtue, though we have it not, and appear to be inspired by the divine afflatus. Nay, we sometimes—often—are truly so inspired, and write like Gods. A few of us are subject to fits, and in them utter oracles. But the truth is too glaring to be denied, that all male rational creatures are in the long run vile, corrupt, and polluted; and that the best man that ever died in his bed within the arms of his distracted wife, is wickeder far than the worst woman that was ever iniquitously hanged for murdering what was called her poor husband, who in all cases righteously deserved his fate. Purity of mind is incompatible with manhood; and a monk is a monster—so is every Fellow of a College, and every Roman Catholic Priest, from Father O'Leary to Dr Doyle. Confessions, indeed! Why, had Joseph himself confessed all he ever felt and thought to Potiphar's wife, she would have frowned him from her presence in all the chaste dignity of virtuous indignation, and so far from tearing off his garment, would not have touched it for the whole world. But all women—till men by marriage, or by something, if that be possible, worse even than marriage, try in vain to reduce them nearly to their own level—are pure as dewdrops or moonbeams, and know not the meaning of evil. Their genius conjectures it; and in that there is no sin. But their genius loves best to image forth good, for 'tis the blessing of their life, its power, and its glory; and hence, when they write poetry, it is religious, sweet, soft, solemn, and divine.

Observe, however—to prevent all mistakes—that we speak but of British women—and of British women of the present age. Of the German Fair Sex we know little or nothing; but daresay that the Baroness la Motte Fouqué is a worthy woman, and as vapid as the Baron. Neither make we any allusion to Madame Genlis, or other illustrious Lemans of the French school, who charitably adopted their own natural daughters, while other less pious ladies, who had become mothers without being wives, sent theirs to Foundling Hospitals. We restrict ourselves to the Maids and Matrons of this Island—and of this Age; and as it is of poetical genius that we speak—we name the names of Joanna Baillie, Mary Tighe, Felicia Hemans, Caroline Bowles, Mary Howitt, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and the Lovely Norton; while we pronounce several other sweet-sounding Christian surnames in whispering under-tones of affection, almost as inaudible as the sound of the growing of grass on a dewy evening.

Corinna and Sappho must have been women of transcendant genius so to move Greece. For though the Greek character was most impressible and combustible, it was so only to the finest finger and fire. In that delightful land dunces were all dumb. Where genius alone spoke and sung poetry, how hard to excel! Corinna and Sappho did excel—the one, it is said, conquering Pindar—and the other all the world but Phaon.

But our own Joanna has been visited with a still loftier inspiration. She has created tragedies which Sophocles—or Euripides—nay, even Æschylus himself,

might have feared, in competition for the crown. She is our Tragic Queen; but she belongs to all places as to all times; and Sir Walter truly said—let them who dare deny it—that he saw her Genius in a sister shape sailing by the side of the Swan of Avon. Yet Joanna loves to pace the pastoral mead; and then we are made to think of the tender dawn, the clear noon, and the bright meridian of her life, past among the tall cliffs of the silver Calder, and in the lonesome heart of the dark Strathaven Muirs.

Plays on the Passions! "How absurd!" said one philosophical writer. "This will never do!" It has done—perfectly. What, pray, is the aim of all tragedy? The Stagyrite has told us—to purify the passions by pity and terror. They ventilate and cleanse the soul—till its atmosphere is like that of a calm, bright summer day. All plays, therefore, must be on the Passions. And all that Joanna intended—and it was a great intention greatly effected—was in her Series of Dramas to steady her purposes by ever keeping one great end in view, of which the perpetual perception could not fail to make all the means harmonious, and therefore majestic. One passion was, therefore, constituted sovereign of the soul in each glorious tragedy—sovereign sometimes by divine right—sometimes an usurper—generally a tyrant. In De Monfort we behold the horrid reign of Hate. But in his sister—the seraphic sway of Love. Darkness and light sometimes opposed in sublime contrast—and sometimes the light swallowing up the darkness—or "smoothing its raven

down till it smiles." Finally, all is black as night and the grave—for the light, unextinguished, glides away into some far-off world of peace. Count Basil! A woman only could have imagined that divine drama. Now different the love Basil feels for Victoria from Antony's for Cleopatra! Pure, deep, high as the heaven and the sea. Yet on it we see him borne away to shame, destruction, and death. It is indeed his ruling passion. But up to the day he first saw her face his ruling passion had been the love of glory. And the hour he died by his own hand was troubled into madness by many passions; for are they not all mysteriously linked together, sometimes a dreadful brotherhood?

Do you wonder how one mind can have such vivid consciousness of the feelings of another, while their characters are cast in such different moulds? It is, indeed, wonderful—but the power is that of sympathy and genius. The dramatic poet, whose heart breathes love to all living things, and whose overflowing tenderness diffuses itself over the beauty even of unliving nature, may yet paint with his creative hand the steeled heart of him who sits on a throne of blood—the lust of crime in a mind polluted with wickedness—the remorse of acts which could never pass in thought through his imagination as his own. For, in the act of imagination, he can suppress in his mind its own peculiar feelings—its good and gracious affections—call up from their hidden places those elements of our being, of which the seeds were sown in him as in all—give them unnatural magnitude and power—conceive the disorder of passions, the perpetra-

tion of crimes, the tortures of remorse, or the scorn of that human weakness, from which his own gentle bosom and blameless life are pure and free. He can bring himself, in short, into an imaginary and momentary sympathy with the wicked, just as his mind falls of itself into a natural and true sympathy with those whose character is accordant with his own; and watching the emotions and workings of his mind in the spontaneous and in the forced sympathy, he knows and understands from himself what passes in the minds of others. What is done in the highest degree by the highest genius, is done by all of ourselves in lesser degree, and unconsciously, at every moment in our intercourse with one another. To this kind of sympathy, so essential to our knowledge of the human mind, and without which there can be neither poetry nor philosophy, are necessary a largeness of heart which willingly yields itself to conceive the feelings and states of others whose character is utterly unlike its own, and freedom from any inordinate overpowering passion which quenches in the mind the feelings of nature it has already known, and places it in habitual enmity to the affections and happiness of its kind. To paint bad passions is not to praise them: they alone can paint them well who hate, fear, or pity them; and therefore Baillie has done so— nay start not—better than Byron.

Well may our land be proud of such women. None such ever before adorned her poetical annals. Glance over that most interesting volume, "Specimens of British Poetesses," by that amiable, ingenious, and erudite

man, the Reverend Alexander Dyce, and what effulgence begins to break towards the close of the eighteenth century! For ages on ages the genius of English women had ever and anon been shining forth in song; but faint though fair was the lustre, and struggling imprisoned in clouds. Some of the sweet singers of those days bring tears to our eyes by their simple pathos—for their poetry breathes of their own sorrows, and shows that they were but too familiar with grief. But their strains are mere melodies "sweetly played in tune." The deeper harmonies of poetry seem to have been beyond their reach. The range of their power was limited. Anne, Countess of Winchilsea—Catherine Phillips, known by the name of Orinda—and Mrs Anne Killigrew, who, as Dryden says, was made an angel, "in the last promotion to the skies"—showed, as they sang on earth, that they were all worthy to sing in heaven. But what were their hymns to those that are now warbled around us from many sister spirits, pure in their lives as they, but brighter far in their genius, and more fortunate in its nurture. Poetry from female lips was then half a wonder, and half a reproach. But now 'tis no longer rare—not even the highest—yes, the highest—for Innocence and Purity are of the highest hierarchies; and the thoughts and feelings they inspire, though breathed in words and tones, "gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman," are yet lofty as the stars, and humble too as the flowers beneath our feet.

We have not forgotten an order of poets, peculiar, we believe, to our own enlightened land—a high order of

poets sprung from the lower orders of the people—and not only sprung from them, but bred as well as born in "the huts where poor men lie," and glorifying their condition by the light of song. Such glory belongs—we believe—exclusively to this country and to this age. Mr Southey, who in his own high genius and fame is never insensible to the virtues of his fellow-men, however humble and obscure the sphere in which they may move, has sent forth a volume—and a most interesting one—on the uneducated poets; nor shall we presume to gainsay one of his benevolent words. But this we do say, that all the verse-writers of whom he there treats, and all the verse-writers of the same sort of whom he does not treat, that ever existed on the face of the earth, shrink up into a lean and shrivelled bundle of dry leaves or sticks, compared with these Five—Burns, Hogg, Cunninghame, Bloomfield, and Clare. It must be a strong soil—the soil of this Britain—which sends up such products; and we must not complain of the clime beneath which they grow to such height, and bear such fruitage. The spirit of domestic life must be sound—the natural knowledge of good and evil high—the religion true—the laws just—and the government, on the whole, good, methinks, that have all conspired to educate these children of genius, whose souls Nature had framed of the finer clay.

Such men seem to us more clearly and certainly men of genius, than many who, under different circumstances, may have effected higher achievements. For though they enjoyed in their condition ineffable blessings to dilate

their spirits, and touch them with all tenderest thoughts, it is not easy to imagine, on the other hand, the deadening or degrading influences to which by that condition they were inevitably exposed, and which keep down the heaven-aspiring flame of genius, or extinguish it wholly, or hold it smouldering under all sorts of rubbish. Only look at the attempts in verse of the common run of clodhoppers. Buy a few ballads from the wall or stall—and you groan to think that you have been born—such is the mess of mire and filth which often, without the slightest intention of offence, those rural, city, or suburban bards of the lower orders prepare for boys, virgins, and matrons, who all devour it greedily, without suspicion. Strange it is that even in that mural minstrelsy, occasionally occurs a phrase or line, and even stanza, sweet and simple, and to nature true; but consider it in the light of poetry read, recited, and sung by the people, and you might well be appalled by the revelation therein made of the tastes, feelings, and thoughts of the lower orders. And yet in the midst of all the popularity of such productions, the best of Burns' poems, his Cottar's Saturday Night, and most delicate of his songs, are still more popular, and read by the same classes with a still greater eagerness of delight. Into this mystery we shall not now enquire; but we mention it now merely to show how divine a thing true genius is, which, burning within the bosoms of a few favourite sons of nature, guards them from all such pollution, lifts them up above it all, purifies their whole being, and without consuming their family affections or friendships, or making them unhappy

with their lot, and disgusted with all about them, reveals to them all that is fair and bright and beautiful in feeling and in imagination, makes them very poets indeed, and should fortune favour, and chance and accident, gains for them wide over the world, the glory of a poet's name.

From all such evil influences incident to their condition —and we are now speaking but of the evil—The Five emerged; and first and foremost—Burns. Our dearly beloved Thomas Carlyle is reported to have said at a dinner given to Allan Cunninghame in Dumfries, that Burns was not only one of the greatest of poets, but likewise of philosophers. We hope not. What he did may be told in one short sentence. His genius purified and ennobled in his imagination and in his heart the character and condition of the Scottish peasantry—and reflected them, ideally true to nature, in the living waters of Song. That is what he did; but to do that, did not require the highest powers of the poet and the philosopher. Nay, had he marvellously possessed them, he never would have written a single line of the poetry of the late Robert Burns. Thank Heaven for not having made him such a man—but merely the Ayrshire Ploughman. He was called into existence for a certain work, for the fulness of time was come—but he was neither a Shakspeare, nor a Scott, nor a Goethe; and therefore he rejoiced in writing the Saturday Night, and the Twa Dogs, and The Holy Fair, and O' a' the Airts the Win' can blaw, and eke the Vision. But forbid it, all ye Gracious Powers! that we should quarrel with Thomas Carlyle—

and that, too, for calling Robert Burns one of the greatest of poets and philosophers.

Like a strong man rejoicing to run a race, we behold Burns in his golden prime; and glory gleams from the Peasant's head, far and wide over Scotland. See the shadow tottering to the tomb! frenzied with fears of a prison—for some five pound debt—existing, perhaps, but in his diseased imagination—for, alas! sorely diseased it was, and he too, at last, seemed somewhat insane. He escapes that disgrace in the grave. Buried with his bones be all remembrances of his miseries! But the spirit of song, which was his true spirit, unpolluted and unfallen, lives, and breathes, and has its being, in the peasant-life of Scotland; his songs, which are as household and sheepfold words, consecrated by the charm that is in all the heart's purest affections, love and pity, and the joy of grief, shall never decay, till among the people have decayed the virtues which they celebrate, and by which they were inspired; and should some dismal change in the skies ever overshadow the sunshine of our national character, and savage storms end in sullen stillness, which is moral death, in the poetry of Burns the natives of happier lands will see how noble was once the degenerated race that may then be looking down disconsolately on the dim grass of Scotland with the unuplifted eyes of cowards and slaves.

The truth ought always to be spoken; and therefore we say that in fancy James Hogg—in spite of his name and his teeth—was not inferior to Robert Burns—and why not? The Forest is a better school-room for Fancy

than ever Burns studied in; it overflowed with poetical traditions. But comparisons are always odious; and the great glory of James is, that he is as unlike Robert as ever one poet was unlike another.

Among hills that once were a forest, and still bear that name, and by the side of a river not unknown in song, lying in his plaid on a brae among the "woolly people," behold that true son of genius—"The Ettrick Shepherd." We are never so happy as when praising James; but pastoral poets are the most incomprehensible of God's creatures; and here is one of the best of them all, who confesses the Chaldee and denies the Noctes!

The Queen's Wake is a garland of fair forest flowers, bound with a band of rushes from the moor. It is not a poem—not it—nor was it intended to be so; you might as well call a bright bouquet of flowers a flower, which, by the by, we do in Scotland. Some of the ballads are very beautiful; one or two even splendid; most of them spirited; and the worst far better than the best that ever was written by any bard in danger of being a blockhead. "Kilmeny" alone places our (ay, *our*) Shepherd among the Undying Ones. London soon loses all memory of lions, let them visit her in the shape of any animal they please. But the Heart of the Forest never forgets. It knows no such word as absence. The Death of a Poet there, is but the beginning of a Life of Fame. His songs no more perish than do flowers. There are no Annuals in the Forest. All are perennial; or if they do indeed die, their fadings away are invisible in the constant succession—the sweet unbroken series of ever-

lasting bloom. So will it be in his native haunts with the many songs of the Ettrick Shepherd. The lochs may be drained—corn may grow where once the Yarrow flowed—nor is such change much more unlikely than in the olden time would have been thought the extirpation of all the vast oak-woods, where the deer trembled to fall into the den of the wolf, and the wild boar barrowed beneath the eagle's eyrie. All extinct now! But obsolete never shall be the Shepherd's plaintive or pawky, his melancholy or merry, lays. The ghost of "Mary Lee" will be seen in the moonlight coming down the hills; the "Witch of Fife" on the clouds will still bestride her besom; and the "Gude Grey Cat" will mew in imagination, were even the last mouse on his last legs, and the feline species swept off by war, pestilence, and famine, and heard to pur no more!

It is here where Burns was weakest, that the Shepherd is strongest—the world of shadows. The airy beings that to the impassioned soul of Burns seemed cold, bloodless, unattractive, rise up lovely in their own silent domains, before the dreaming fancy of the tender-hearted Shepherd. The still green beauty of the pastoral hills and vales where he passed all his days, inspired him with ever-brooding visions of Fairy Land, till, as he lay musing on the brae, the world of shadows seemed, in the clear depths, a softened reflection of real life, like the hills and heavens in the water of his native lake. When he speaks of Fairy Land, his language becomes ærial as the very voice of the fairy people, serenest images rise up with the music of the verse, and we almost believe in

the being of those unlocalized realms of peace, and of which he sings like a native minstrel.

Yes, James—thou wert but a poor shepherd to the last—poor in this world's goods—though Altrive Lake is a pretty little bit farmie—given thee by the best of Dukes—with its few laigh sheep-braes—its somewhat stony hayfield or two—its pasture where Crummie might unhungered graze—nyeuck for the potato's bloomy or ploomy shaws—and path-divided from the porch the garden, among whose flowers "wee Jamie" played. But nature had given thee, to console thy heart in all disappointments from the "false smiling of fortune beguiling," a boon which thou didst hug to thy heart with transport on the darkest day—the "gift o' genie," and the power of immortal song.

And has Scotland to the Ettrick Shepherd been just—been generous—as she was—or was not—to the Ayrshire peasant?—has she, in her conduct to him, shown her contrition for her sin—whatever that may have been—to Burns? It is hard to tell. Fashion tosses the feathered head—and gentility turns away her painted cheek from the Mountain Bard; but when, at the shrine of true poetry, did ever such votaries devoutly worship? Cold, false, and hollow, ever has been their admiration of genius—and different, indeed, from their evanescent ejaculations, has ever been the enduring voice of fame. Scorn be to the scorners! But Scott, and Wordsworth, and Southey, and Byron, and the other great bards, have all loved the Shepherd's lays—and Joanna the palm-crowned, and Felicia the muse's darling, and Caroline the Christian poetess, and

all the other fair female spirits of song. And in his native land, all hearts that love her streams, and her hills, and her cottages, and her kirks, the bee-humming garden and the primrose-circled fold, the white hawthorn and the green fairy-knowe, all delight in Kilmeny and Mary Lee, and in many another vision that visited the Shepherd in the Forest.

And what can surpass many of the Shepherd's songs? The most undefinable of all undefinable kinds of poetical inspiration are surely—Songs. They seem to start up indeed from the dew-sprinkled soil of a poet's soul, like flowers; the first stanza being root, the second leaf, the third bud, and all the rest blossom, till the song is like a stalk laden with its own beauty, and laying itself down in languid delight on the soft bed of moss—song and flower alike having the same "dying fall!"

A fragment! And the more piteous because a fragment. Go in search of the pathetic, and you will find it tear-steeped, sigh-breathed, moan-muttered, and groaned in fragments. The poet seems often struck dumb by woe—his heart feels that suffering is at its acme—and that he should break off and away from a sight too sad to be longer looked on—haply too humiliating to be disclosed. So, too, it sometimes is with the beautiful. The soul in its delight seeks to escape from the emotion that oppresses it—is speechless—and the song falls mute. Such is frequently the character—and the origin of that character—of our auld Scottish Sangs. In their mournfulness are they not almost like the wail of some bird distracted on the bush from which its nest has been

harried, and then suddenly flying away for ever into the woods? In their joyfulness, are they not almost like the hymn of some bird, that love-stricken suddenly darts from the tree-top down to the caresses that flutter through the spring? And such, too, are often the airs to which those dear auld sangs are sung. From excess of feeling—fragmentary; or of one divine part to which genius may be defied to conceive another, because but one hour in all time could have given it birth.

You may call this pure nonsense—but 'tis so pure that you need not fear to swallow it. All great song-writers, nevertheless, have been great thieves. Those who had the blessed fate to flourish first—to be born when "this auld cloak was new,"—the cloak we mean which nature wears—scrupled not to creep upon her as she lay asleep beneath the shadow of some single tree among

> "The grace of forest-woods decay'd,
> And pastoral melancholy,"

and to steal the very pearls out of her hair—out of the silken snood which enamoured Pan himself had not untied in the Golden Age. Or if she ventured, as sometimes she did, to walk along the highways of the earth, they robbed her in the face of day of her dew-wrought reticule—without hurting, however, the hand from which they brushed that net of gossamer.

Then came the Silver Age of Song, the age in which we now live—and the song-singers were thieves still—stealing and robbing from them who had stolen and robbed of old; yet, how account you for this phenome-

non—all parties remain richer than ever—and Nature, especially, after all this thieving and robbery, and piracy and plunder, many million times richer than the day on which she received her dowery,

" The bridal of the earth and sky;"

and with " golden store" sufficient in its scatterings to enable all the sons of genius she will ever bear, to " set up for themselves" in poetry, accumulating capital upon capital, till each is a Crœsus, rejoicing to lend it out without any other interest than cent per cent, paid in sighs, smiles, and tears, and without any other security than the promise of a quiet eye,

" That broods and sleeps on its own heart!"

Amongst the most famous thieves in our time have been Rob, James, and Allan. Burns never saw or heard a jewel or a tune of a thought or a feeling, but he immediately made it his own—that is, stole it. He was too honest a man to refrain from such thefts. The thoughts and feelings—to whom by divine right did they belong? To Nature. But Burns beheld them " waif and stray," and in peril of being lost for ever. He seized then on those " snatches of old songs," wavering away into the same oblivion that lies on the graves of the nameless bards who first gave them being; and now, spiritually interfused with his own lays, they are secured against decay—and like them immortal. So hath the Shepherd stolen many of the Flowers of the Forest—whose beauty had breathed there ever since Flodden's fatal overthrow; but they had been long fading and pining

away in the solitary places, wherein so many of their kindred had utterly disappeared, and beneath the restoring light of his genius their bloom and their balm were for ever renewed. But the thief of all thieves is the Nithsdale and Galloway thief—called by Sir Walter, most characteristically, "Honest Allan!" Thief and forger as he is—we often wonder why he is permitted to live. Many is the sweet stanza he has stolen from Time—that silly old carle who kens not even his own—many the lifelike line—and many the strange single word that seems to possess the power of all the parts of speech. And, having stolen them, to what use did he turn the treasures? Why, unable to give back every man his own—for they were all dead, buried, and forgotten—by a potent prayer he evoked from his Pool-Palace, overshadowed by the Dalswinton woods, the Genius of the Nith, to preserve the gathered flowers of song for ever unwithered, for that they all had grown ages ago beneath and around the green shadows of Criffel, and longed now to be embalmed in the purity of the purest river that Scotland sees flowing in unsullied silver to the sea. But the Genius of the Nith—frowning and smiling—as he looked upon his son alternately in anger, love, and pride—refused the votive offering, and told him to be gone; for that he—the Genius—was not a Cromek—and could distinguish with half an eye what belonged to antiquity, from what had undergone, in Allan's hands, change into "something rich and rare;" and above all, from what had been blown to life that very year by the breath of Allan's own genius,

love-inspired by "his ain lassie," the "lass that he loe'd best," springing from seeds itself had sown, and cherished by the dews of the same gracious skies, that filled with motion and music the transparency of the river god's never-failing urn.

We love Allan's "Maid of Elvar." It beats with a fine, free, bold, and healthful spirit. Along with the growth of the mutual love of Eustace and Sybil, he paints peasant-life with a pen that reminds us of the pencil of Wilkie. He is as familiar with it all as Burns; and Burns would have perused with tears many of these pictures, even the most cheerful—for the flood-gates of Robin's heart often suddenly flung themselves open to a touch, while a rushing gush—wondering gazers knew not why—bedimmed the lustre of his large black eyes. Allan gives us descriptions of Washings and Watchings o' claes, as Homer has done before him in the Odyssey, and that other Allan in the Gentle Shepherd—of Kirks, and Christenings, and Hallowe'ens, and other Festivals. Nor has he feared to string his lyre—why should he?—to such themes as the Cottar's Saturday Night—and the simple ritual of our faith, sung and said

> "In some small kirk upon the sunny brae,
> That stands all by itself on some sweet Sabbath-day."

Aye, many are the merits of this "Rustic Tale." To appreciate them properly, we must carry along with us, during the perusal of the poem, a right understanding and feeling of that pleasant epithet—Rustic. Rusticity and Urbanity are polar opposites—and there lie between many million modes of Manners, which you

know are Minor Morals. But not to puzzle a subject in itself sufficiently simple, the same person may be at once rustic and urbane, and that too, either in his character of man or of poet, or in his twofold capacity of both; for observe that, though you may be a man without being a poet, we defy you to be a poet without being a man. A Rustic is a clodhopper; an Urbane is a paviour. But it is obvious that the paviour in a field hops the clod; that the clodhopper in a street paces the pavêe. At the same time, it is equally obvious that the paviour, in hopping the clod, performs the feat with a sort of city smoke, which breathes of bricks; that the clodhopper, in pacing the pavêe, overcomes the difficulty with a kind of country air, that is redolent of broom. Probably, too, Urbanus through a deep fallow is seen ploughing his way in pumps; Rusticus along the shallow stones is heard clattering on clogs. But to cease pursuing the subject through all its variations, suffice it for the present, (for we perceive that we must resume the discussion another time) to say, that Allan Cunningham is a living example and lively proof of the truth of our Philosophy—it being universally allowed in the best circles of town and country, that he is an URBANE RUSTIC.

Now, that is the man for our love and money, when the work to be done is a Poem on Scottish Life.

We can say of Allan what Allan says of Eustace

> ——" far from the pasture moor
> He comes; the fragrance of the dale and wood
> Is scenting all his garments, green and good."

The rural imagery is fresh and fair; not copied Cockney-wise, from pictures in oil or water-colours—from mezzotintoes or line-engravings—but from the free open face of day, or the dim retiring face of eve, or the face, "black but comely," of night—by sunlight or moonlight, ever Nature. Sometimes he gives us—Studies. Small, sweet, sunny spots of still or dancing day—stream-gleam—grove-glow—sky-glympse—or cottage-roof, in the deep dell sending up its smoke to the high heavens. But usually Allan paints with a sweeping pencil. He lays down his landscapes, stretching wide and far, and fills them with woods and rivers, hills and mountains, flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; and of all sights in life and nature, none so dear to his eyes as the golden grain, ebbing like tide of sea before a close long line of glancing sickles—no sound so sweet as, rising up into the pure harvest-air, frost-touched though sunny—beneath the shade of hedge-row-tree, after their mid-day meal, the song of the jolly reapers. But are not his pictures sometimes too crowded? No. For there lies the power of the pen over the pencil. The pencil can do much, the pen every thing; the Painter is imprisoned within a few feet of canvass, the Poet commands the horizon with an eye that circumnavigates the globe; even that glorious pageant, a painted Panorama, is circumscribed by bounds, over which imagination, feeling them all too narrow, is uneasy till she soars; but the Poet's Panorama is commensurate with the soul's desires, and may include the Universe.

This Poem reads as if it had been written during the "dewy hour of prime." Allan must be an early riser. But, if not so now, some forty years ago he was up every morning with the lark,

"Walking to labour by that cheerful song,"

away up the Nith, through the Dalswinton woods; or, for any thing we know to the contrary, intersecting with stone-walls, that wanted not their scientific coping, the green pastures of Sanquhar. Now he is familiar with Chantry's form-full statues; then, with the shapeless cairn on the moor, the rude headstone on the martyr's grave. And thus it is that the present has given him power over the past—that a certain grace and delicacy, inspired by the pursuits of his prime, blend with the creative dreams that are peopled with the lights and shadows of his youth—that the spirit of the old ballad breathes still in its strong simplicity through the composition of his "New Poem"—and that art is seen harmoniously blending there with nature.

We have said already that we delight in the story; for it belongs to an "order of *fables* grey," which has been ever dear to Poets. Poets have ever loved to bring into the pleasant places and paths of lowly life, persons (we eschew all manner of *personages* and *heroes* and *heroines*, especially with the epithet "*our*" prefixed) whose native lot lay in a higher sphere: For they felt that by such contrast, natural though rare, a beautiful light was mutually reflected from each condition, and that sacred revelations were thereby made of human character,

of which all that is pure and profound appertains equally to all estates of this our mortal being, provided only that happiness knows from whom it comes, and that misery and misfortune are alleviated by religion. Thus Electra appears before us at her father's Tomb, the virgin-wife of the peasant Auturgus, who reverently abstains from the intact body of the daughter of the king. Look into Shakspeare. Rosalind was not so loveable at court as in the woods. Her beauty might have been more brilliant, and her conversation too, among lords and ladies; but more touching both, because true to tenderer nature, when we see and hear her in dialogue with the neatherdess—ROSALIND and *Audrey!* And trickles not the tear down thy cheek, fair reader—burns not the heart within thee, when thou thinkest of Florizel and Perdita on the Farm in the Forest?

Nor from those visions need we fear to turn to Sybil Lesley. We see her in Elvar Tower, a high-born Lady —in Dalgonar Glen, a humble bondmaid. The change might have been the reverse—as with the lassie beloved by the Gentle Shepherd. Both are best. The bust that gloriously set off the burnishing of the rounded silk, not less divinely shrouded its enchantment beneath the swelling russet. Graceful in bower or hall were those arms, and delicate those fingers, when moving white along the rich embroidery, or across the strings of the sculptured harp; nor less so when before the cottage door they woke the homely music of the humming wheel, or when on the brae beside the Pool, they playfully intertwined their softness with the new-washed fleeces, or when among

the laughing lasses at the Linn, not loath were they to lay out the coarse linen in the bleaching sunshine, conspicuous She the while among the rustic beauties, as was Nausicaa of old among her nymphs at the Fountain.

We are in love with Sybil Lesley. She is full of *spunk*. That is not a vulgar word; or if it have been so heretofore, henceforth let it cease to be so, and be held synonymous with spirit. She shows it in her defiance of Sir Ralph on the shore of Solway—in her flight from the Tower of Elvar; and the character she displays then and there, prepares us for the part she plays in the peasant's cot in the glen of Dalgonar. We are not surprised to see her take so kindly to the duties of a rustic service; for we call to mind how she sat among the humble good-folks in the hall, when Thrift and Waste figured in that rude but wise Morality, and how the gracious lady showed she sympathized with the cares and contentments of lowly life.

England has singled out John Clare from among her humble sons, (Ebenezer Elliot belongs altogether to another order)—as the most conspicuous for poetical genius, next to Robert Bloomfield. That is a proud distinction—whatever critics may choose to say; and we cordially sympathize with the beautiful expression of his gratitude to the Rural Muse, when he says—

> "Like as the little lark from off its nest,
> Beside the mossy hill, awakes in glee,
> To seek the morning's throne, a merry guest—
> So do I seek thy shrine, if that may be,
> To win by new attempts another smile from thee."

Now, England is out of all sight the most beautiful country in the whole world—Scotland alone excepted—and, thank heaven, they two are one kingdom—divided by no line, either real or imaginary—united by the Tweed. We forget at this moment—if ever we knew it—the precise number of her counties; but we remember that one and all of them—"alike, but oh! how different"—are fit birth-places and abodes for poets. Some of them we know well, are flat—and we in Scotland, with hills or mountains for ever before our eyes, are sometimes disposed to find fault with them on that ground—as if nature were not at liberty to find her own level. Flat indeed! So is the sea. Wait till you have walked a few miles in among the Fens—and you will be wafted along like a little sail-boat, up and down undulations green and gladsome as waves. Think ye there is no scenery there? Why, you are in the heart of a vast metropolis!—yet have not the sense to see the silent city of mole-hills sleeping in the sun. Call that pond a lake—and by a word how is it transfigured? Now you discern flowers unfolding on its low banks and braes—and the rustle of the rushes is like that of a tiny forest—how appropriate to the wild! Gaze—and to your gaze what colouring grows! Not in green only—or in russet brown doth nature choose to be apparelled in this her solitude—nor ever again will you call her dreary here—for see how every one of those fifty flying showers lightens up its own line of beauty along the plain—instantaneous as dreams—or stationary as wak-

ing thought—till, ere you are aware that all was changing, the variety has all melted away into one harmonious glow, attempered by that rainbow.

Let these few words suffice to show that we understand and feel the flattest—dullest—tamest places, as they are most ignorantly called—that have yet been discovered in England. Not in such did John Clare abide—but many such he hath traversed; and his studies have been from childhood upwards among scenes which to ordinary eyes might seem to afford small scope and few materials for contemplation. But his are not ordinary eyes—but gifted; and in every nook and corner of his own county the Northamptonshire Peasant has, during some two score years and more, every spring found without seeking either some lovelier aspect of "the old familiar faces," or some new faces smiling upon him, as if mutual recognition kindled joy and amity in their hearts.

John Clare often reminds us of James Grahame. They are two of our most artless poets. Their versification is mostly very sweet, though rather flowing forth according to a certain fine natural sense of melody, than constructed on any principles of music. So, too, with their imagery, which seems seldom selected with much care; so that, while it is always true to nature, and often possesses a charm from its appearing to rise up of itself, and with little or no effort on the poet's part to form a picture, it is not unfrequently chargeable with repetition—sometimes, perhaps, with a sameness which, but for the inherent interest in the objects themselves, might be felt

a little wearisome—there is so much still life. They are both most affectionately disposed towards all manner of birds. Grahame's "Birds of Scotland" is a delightful poem; yet its best passages are not superior to some of Clare's about the same charming creatures—and they are both ornithologists after Audubon's and our own heart. Were all that has been well written in English verse about birds to be gathered together, what a sweet set of volumes it would make! And how many, think ye—three, six, twelve? That would be indeed an aviary—the only one we can think of with pleasure—out of the hedge-rows and the woods. Tories as we are, we never see a wild bird on the wing without inhaling in silence "the Cause of Liberty all over the world!" We feel then that it is indeed "like the air we breathe—without it we die." So do they. We have been reading lately, for a leisure hour or two of an evening—a volume by a worthy German, Doctor Bechstein—on Cage Birds. The slave-dealer never for a moment suspects the wickedness of kidnapping young and old—crimping them for life—teaching them to draw water—and, *oh nefas!* to sing! He seems to think that only in confinement do they fulfil the ends of their existence—even the skylark. Yet he sees them, one and all, subject to the most miserable diseases—and rotting away within the wires. Why could not the Doctor have taken a stroll into the country once or twice a-week, and in one morning or evening hour laid in sufficient music to serve him during the intervening time, without causing a single bosom to be ruffled for his sake? Shoot them—spit them

—pie them—pickle them—eat them—but imprison them not; we speak as Conservatives—murder rather than immure them—for more forgivable far it is to cut short their songs at the height of glee, than to protract them in a rueful simulation of music, in which you hear the same sweet notes, but if your heart thinks at all, "a voice of weeping and of loud lament" all unlike, alas! to the congratulation that from the free choirs is ringing so exultingly in their native woods.

How prettily Clare writes of the "insect youth."

"These tiny loiterers on the barley's beard,
And happy units of a numerous herd
Of playfellows, the laughing Summer brings,
Mocking the sunshine on their glittering wings,
How merrily they creep, and run, and fly!
No kin they bear to labour's drudgery,
Smoothing the velvet of the pale hedge-rose;
And where they fly for dinner no one knows—
The dewdrops feed them not—they love the shine
Of noon, whose suns may bring them golden wine.
All day they're playing in their Sunday dress—
When night repose, for they can do no less;
Then to the heath-bell's purple hood they fly,
And like to princes in their slumbers lie,
Secure from rain, and dropping dews, and all,
In silken beds and roomy painted hall.
So merrily they spend their summer-day,
Now in the corn-fields, now in the new-mown hay.
One almost fancies that such happy things,
With colour'd hoods and richly-burnish'd wings,
Are fairy folk, in splendid masquerade
Disguised, as if of mortal folk afraid.
Keeping their joyous pranks a mystery still,
Lest glaring day should do their secrets ill."

Time has been—nor yet very long ago—when such unpretending poetry as this—humble indeed in every

sense, but nevertheless the product of genius which speaks for itself audibly and clearly in lowliest strains —would not have passed by unheeded or unbeloved; now-a-days it may to many who hold their heads high, seem of no more worth than an old song. But as Wordsworth says,

> "Pleasures newly found are sweet,
> Though they lie about our feet;"

and if stately people would but stoop and look about their paths, which do not always run along the heights, they would often make discoveries of what concerned them more than speculations among the stars.

It is not to be thought, however, that the Northamptonshire Peasant does not often treat earnestly of the common pleasures and pains, the cares and occupations of that condition of life in which he was born, and has passed all his days. He knows them well, and has illustrated them well, though seldomer in his later than in his earlier poems; and we cannot help thinking that he might greatly extend his popularity, which in England is considerable, by devoting his Rural Muse to subjects lying within his ken, and of everlasting interest. Bloomfield's reputation rests on his "Farmer's Boy"—on some exquisite passages on "News from the Farm"—and on some of the tales and pictures in his "May-day with the Muses." His smaller poems are very inferior to those of Clare—but the Northamptonshire Peasant has written nothing in which all honest English hearts must delight, at all comparable with those truly

rural compositions of the Suffolk shoemaker. It is in his power to do so—would he but earnestly set himself to the work. He must be more familiar with all the ongoings of rural life than his compeer could have been; nor need he fear to tread again the same ground, for it is as new as if it had never been touched, and will continue to be so till the end of time. The soil in which the native virtues of the English character grow, is unexhausted and inexhaustible; let him break it up on any spot he chooses, and poetry will spring to light like clover from lime. Nor need he fear being an imitator. His mind is an original one, his most indifferent verses prove it; for though he must have read much poetry since his earlier day—doubtless all our best modern poetry—he retains his own style, which, though it be not marked by any very strong characteristics, is yet sufficiently peculiar to show that it belongs to himself, and is a natural gift. Pastorals—eclogues—and idyls—in a hundred forms—remain to be written by such poets as he and his brethren; and there can be no doubt at all, that if he will scheme something of the kind, and begin upon it, without waiting to know fully or clearly what he may be intending, that before three winters, with their long nights, are gone, he will find himself in possession of more than mere materials for a volume of poems that will meet with general acceptation, and give him a permanent place by the side of him he loves so well—Robert Bloomfield.

Ebenezer Elliot (of whom more another day) claims with pride to be the Poet of the Poor—and the poor

might well be proud, did they know it, that they have such a poet. Not a few of them know it now—and many will know it in future; for a muse of fire like his will yet send its illumination "into dark deep holds." May it consume all the noxious vapours that infest such regions—and purify the atmosphere—till the air breathed there be the breath of life. But the poor have other poets besides him—Crabbe and Burns. We again mention their names—and no more. Kindly spirits were they both; but Burns had experienced all his poetry—and therefore his poetry is an embodiment of national character. We say it not in disparagement or reproof of Ebenezer—conspicuous over all—for let all men speak as they think or feel—but how gentle in all his noblest inspirations was Robin! He did not shun sins or sorrows; but he told the truth of the poor man's life, when he showed that it was, on the whole, virtuous and happy—bear witness those immortal strains, "The Twa Dogs," "The Vision," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," the sangs voiced all braid Scotland thorough by her boys and virgins, say rather her lads and lassies—while the lark sings aloft and the linnet below, the mavis in the golden broom accompanying the music in the golden cloud. We desire—not in wilful delusion—but in earnest hope—in devout trust—that poetry shall show that the paths of the peasant poor are paths of pleasantness and peace. If they should seem in that light even pleasanter and more peaceful than they ever now can be below the sun, think not that any evil can arise "to mortal man who liveth here by toil"

from such representations—for imagination and reality are not two different things—they blend in life; but there the darker shadows do often, alas! prevail—and sometimes may be felt even by the hand; whereas in poetry the lights are triumphant—and gazing on the glory men's hearts burn within them—and they carry the joy in among their own griefs, till despondency gives way to exultation, and the day's darg of this worky world is lightened by a dawn of dreams.

This is the effect of all good poetry—according to its power—of the poetry of Robert Bloomfield as of the poetry of Robert Burns. John Clare, too, is well entitled to a portion of such praise; and therefore his name deserves to become a household word in the dwellings of the rural poor. Living in leisure among the scenes in which he once toiled, may he once more contemplate them all without disturbance. Having lost none of his sympathies, he has learnt to refine them all and see into their source—and wiser in his simplicity than they who were formerly his yokefellows are in theirs, he knows many things well which they know imperfectly or not at all, and is privileged therein to be their teacher. Surely in an age when the smallest contribution to science is duly estimated, and useful knowledge not only held in honour but diffused, poetry ought not to be despised, more especially when emanating from them who belong to the very condition which they seek to illustrate, and whose ambition it is to do justice to its natural enjoyments and appropriate virtues. In spite of all they have suffered, and still suffer, the peasantry of England are a race that may

be regarded with better feelings than pride. We look forward confidently to the time when education—already in much good—and if the plans of the wisest counsellors prevail, about to become altogether good—will raise at once their condition and their character. The Government has its duties to discharge—clear as day. And what is not in the power of the gentlemen of England? Let them exert that power to the utmost—and then indeed they will deserve the noble name of "Aristocracy." We speak not thus in reproach—for they better deserve that name than the same order in any other country; but in no other country are such interests given to that order in trust—and as they attend to that trust is the glory or the shame—the blessing or the curse—of their high estate.

But let us retrace our footsteps in moralizing mood, not unmixed with sadness—to the Mausoleum of Burns. Scotland is abused by England for having starved Burns to death, or for having suffered him to drink himself to death, out of a cup filled to the brim with bitter disappointment and black despair. England lies. There is our gage-glove, let her take it up, and then for mortal combat with sword and spear—only not on horseback—for, for reasons on which it would be idle to be more explicit, we always fight now on foot, and have sent our high horse to graze all the rest of his life on the mountains of the moon. Well then, Scotland met Burns, on his first sun-burst, with one exulting acclaim. Scotland bought and read his poetry, and Burns, for a poor man, became rich—rich to his heart's desire

—and reached the summit of his ambition, in the way of this world's life, in a—Farm. Blithe Robin would have scorned "an awmous" from any hands but from those of nature; nor in those days needed he help from woman-born. True, that times begun by and by to go rather hard with him, and he with them; for his mode of life was not

"Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,"

and as we sow we must reap. His day of life began to darken ere meridian—and the darkness doubtless had brought disturbance before it had been perceived by any eyes but his own—for people are always looking to themselves and their own lot; and how much mortal misery may for years be daily depicted in the face, figure, or manners even of a friend, without our seeing or suspecting it! Till all at once he makes a confession, and we then know that he has been long numbered among the most wretched of the wretched—the slave of his own sins and sorrows—or thralled beneath those of another, to whom fate may have given sovereign power over his whole life. Well, then—or rather ill, then—Burns behaved as most men do in misery—and the farm going to ruin—that is, crop and stock to pay the rent—he desired to be—and was made—an Exciseman. And for that—you ninny—you are whinnying scornfully at Scotland! Many a better man than yourself—beg your pardon—has been, and is now, an Exciseman. Nay, to be plain with you—we doubt if your education has been

sufficiently intellectual for an Exciseman. We never heard it said of you,

"And even the story ran that he could gauge."

Burns then was made what he desired to be—what he was fit for—though you are not—and what was in itself respectable—an Exciseman. His salary was not so large certainly as that of the Bishop of Durham—or even of London—but it was certainly larger than that of many a curate at that time doing perhaps double or treble duty in those dioceses, without much audible complaint on their part, or outcry from Scotland against blind and brutal English bishops, or against beggarly England, for starving her pauper-curates, by whatever genius or erudition adorned. Burns died an Exciseman, it is true, at the age of thirty-seven; on the same day died an English curate we could name, a surpassing scholar, and of stainless virtue, blind, palsied, "old and miserably poor"—without as much money as would bury him; and no wonder, for he never had the salary of a Scotch Exciseman.

Two blacks—nay twenty—won't make a white. True—but one black is as black as another—and the Southern Pot, brazen as it is, must not abuse with impunity the Northern Pan. But now to the right nail, and let us knock it on the head. What did England do for her own Bloomfield? He was not in genius to be spoken of in the same year with Burns—but he was beyond all compare, and out of all sight, the best poet that had arisen produced by England's lower orders. He was the most

spiritual shoemaker that ever handled an awl. The Farmer's Boy is a wonderful poem—and will live in the poetry of England. Did England, then, keep Bloomfield in comfort, and scatter flowers along the smooth and sunny path that led him to the grave? No. He had given him, by some minister or other, we believe Lord Sidmouth, a paltry place in some office or other—most uncongenial with all his nature and all his habits—of which the shabby salary was insufficient to purchase for his family even the bare necessaries of life. He thus dragged out for many long obscure years a sickly existence, as miserable as the existence of a good man can be made by narrowest circumstances—and all the while Englishmen were scoffingly scorning, with haughty and bitter taunts, the patronage that at his own earnest desire, made Burns an Exciseman. Nay, when Southey, late in Bloomfield's life, and when it was drawing mournfully to a close, proposed a contribution for his behoof, and put down his own five pounds, how many purse-strings were untied? how much fine gold was poured out for the indigent son of genius and virtue? Shame shuffles the sum out of sight—for it was not sufficient to have bought the manumission of an old negro slave.

It was no easy matter to deal rightly with such a man as Burns. In those disturbed and distracted times, still more difficult was it to carry into execution any designs for his good—and much was there even to excuse his countrymen then in power for looking upon him with an evil eye. But Bloomfield led a pure, peaceable, and blameless life. Easy, indeed, would it have been to make

him happy—but he was as much forgotten as if he had been dead; and when he died—did England mourn over him—or, after having denied him bread, give him so much as a stone? No. He dropt into the grave with no other lament we ever heard of but a few copies of poorish verses in some of the Annuals, and seldom or never now does one hear a whisper of his name. O fie! well may the white rose blush red—and the red rose turn pale. Let England then leave Scotland to her shame about Burns; and, thinking of her own treatment of Bloomfield, cover her own face with both her hands, and confess that it was pitiful. At least, if she will not hang down her head in humiliation for her own neglect of her own "poetic child," let her not hold it high over Scotland for the neglect of hers—palliated as that neglect was by many things—and since, in some measure, expiated by a whole nation's tears shed over her great poet's grave.

What! not a word for Allan Ramsay? Theocritus was a pleasant Pastoral, and Sicilia sees him among the stars. But all his dear Idyls together are not equal in worth to the single Gentle Shepherd. Habbie's How is a hallowed place now among the green airy Pentlands. Sacred for ever the solitary murmur of that waterfa'!

> "A flowerie howm, between twa verdant braes,
> Where lassies use to wash and bleach their claes;
> A trotting burnie, wimpling through the ground,
> It's channel pebbles, shining, smooth, and round:
> Here view twa barefoot beauties, clean and clear,
> 'Twill please your eye, then gratify your ear;

While Jenny what she wishes discommends,
And Meg, with better sense, true love defends!"

"About them and siclike," is the whole poem. Yet "faithful loves shall memorize the song." Without any scenery but that of rafters, which overhead fancy may suppose a grove, 'tis even yet sometimes acted by rustics in the barn, though nothing on this earth will ever persuade a low-born Scottish lass to take a part in a play; while delightful is felt, even by the lords and ladies of the land, the simple Drama of humble life; and we ourselves have seen a high-born maiden look "beautiful exceedingly" as Patie's Betrothed, kilted to the knee in the kirtle of a Shepherdess.

We have been gradually growing national overmuch, and are about to grow even more so, therefore ask you to what era, pray, did Thomson belong? To none. Thomson had no precursor—and till Cowper no follower. He effulged all at once sunlike—like Scotland's storm-loving, mist-enamoured sun, which till you have seen on a day of thunder, you cannot be said ever to have seen the sun. Cowper followed Thomson merely in time. We should have had the Task, even had we never had the Seasons. These two were "Heralds of a mighty train ensuing;" add them, then, to the worthies of our own age, and they belong to it—and all the rest of the poetry of the modern world—to which add that of the ancient—if multiplied by ten in quantity—and by twenty in quality—would not so variously, so vigorously, and so truly image the form and pressure, the life and spirit of

the mother of us all—Nature. Are then the Seasons and the Task Great Poems? Yes.—Why? What! Do you need to be told that that Poem must be great, which was the first to paint the rolling mystery of the year, and to show that all its Seasons are but the varied God? The idea was original and sublime; and the fulfilment thereof so complete, that some six thousand years having elapsed between the creation of the world and of that poem, some sixty thousand, we prophesy, will elapse between the appearance of that poem and the publication of another equally great, on a subject external to the mind, equally magnificent. We further presume, that you hold sacred the Hearth. Now, in the Task, the Hearth is the heart of the poem, just as it is of a happy house. No other poem is so full of domestic happiness—humble and high; none is so breathed over by the spirit of the Christian religion.

Poetry, which, though not dead, had long been sleeping in Scotland, was restored to waking life by THOMSON. His genius was national; and so, too, was the subject of his first and greatest song. By saying that his genius was national, we mean that its temperament was enthusiastic and passionate, and that, though highly imaginative, the sources of its power lay in the heart. The Castle of Indolence is distinguished by purer taste and finer fancy; but with all its exquisite beauties, that poem is but the vision of a dream. The Seasons are glorious realities; and the charm of the strain that sings the "rolling year" is its truth. But what mean we by saying that the Seasons are a national subject?—do we

assert that they are solely Scottish? That would be too bold, even for us; but we scruple not to assert, that Thomson has made them so, as far as might be without insult, injury, or injustice, to the rest of the globe. His suns rise and set in Scottish heavens; his "deep-fermenting tempests, are brewed in grim evening" Scottish skies; Scottish is his thunder of cloud and cataract; his "vapours, and snows, and storms" are Scottish; and, strange as the assertion would have sounded in the ears of Samuel Johnson, Scottish are his woods, their sugh, and their roar; nor less their stillness, more awful amidst the vast multitude of steady stems, than when all the sullen pine-tops are swinging to the hurricane. A dread love of his native land was in his heart when he cried in the solitude—

> "Hail, kindred glooms! congenial horrors, hail!"

The genius of HOME was national—and so, too, was the subject of his justly famous Tragedy of Douglas. He had studied the old Ballads; their simplicities were sweet to him as wall-flowers on ruins. On the story of Gill Morice, who was an Earl's son, he founded the Tragedy, which surely no Scottish eyes ever witnessed without tears. Are not these most Scottish lines?—

> "Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
> Accords with my soul's sadness!"

And these even more so—

> "Red came the river down, and loud and oft
> The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd!"

The Scottish Tragedian in an evil hour crossed the

Tweed, riding on horseback all the way to London. His genius got Anglified, took a consumption, and perished in the prime of life. But nearly half a century afterwards, on seeing the Siddons in *Lady Randolph*, and hearing her low, deep, wild, wo-begone voice exclaim, "My beautiful! my brave!" "the aged harper's soul awoke," and his dim eyes were again lighted up for a moment with the fires of genius—say rather for a moment bedewed with the tears of sensibility re-awakened from decay and dotage.

The genius of Beattie was national, and so was the subject of his charming song—The Minstrel. For what is its design? He tells us, to trace the progress of a poetical genius born in a rude age, from the first dawning of reason and fancy, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a Scottish Minstrel; that is, as an itinerant poet and musician—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

"There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires perchance in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves and vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the North Countrie;
A nation famed for song and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil, serene amid alarms;
Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms.

"The shepherd swain, of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough he never sway'd:
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living waters from the rock;

The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went."

Did patriotism ever inspire genius with sentiment more Scottish than *that?* Did imagination ever create scenery more Scottish, Manners, Morals, Life?

"Lo! where the stripling rapt in wonder roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And echo swells the chorus to the skies!"

Beattie chants there like a man who had been at the Linn of Dee. He wore a wig, it is true; but at times, when the fit was on him, he wrote like the unshorn Apollo.

The genius of Grahame was national, and so too was the subject of his first and best poem—The Sabbath.

"How still the morning of the hallow'd day!"

is a line that could have been uttered only by a holy Scottish heart. For we alone know what is indeed Sabbath silence—an earnest of everlasting rest. To our hearts, the very birds of Scotland sing holily on that day. A sacred smile is on the dewy flowers. The lilies look whiter in their loveliness; the blush-rose reddens in the sun with a diviner dye; and with a more celestial scent the hoary hawthorn sweetens the wilderness. Sorely disturbed of yore, over the glens and hills of Scotland, was the Day of Peace!

"O, the great goodness of the *Saints of Old!*"

the Covenanters. Listen to the Sabbath bard—

"With them each day was holy; but that morn
On which the angel said, 'See where the Lord
Was laid,' joyous arose; to die that day
Was bliss. Long ere the dawn by devious ways,
O'er hills, through woods, o'er dreary wastes, they sought
The upland muirs where rivers, there but brooks,
Dispart to different seas. Fast by such brooks
A little glen is sometimes scoop'd, a plat
With greensward gay, and flowers that strangers seem
Amid the heathery wild, that all around
Fatigues the eye: in solitudes like these,
Thy persecuted children, Scotia, foil'd
A tyrant's and a bigot's bloody laws.
There, leaning on his spear, (one of the array
Whose gleam, in former days, had scathed the rose
On England's banner, and had powerless struck
The infatuate monarch, and his wavering host!)
The lyart veteran heard the word of God
By Cameron thunder'd, or by Renwick pour'd
In gentle stream; then rose the song, the loud
Acclaim of praise. The wheeling plover ceased
Her plaint; the solitary place was glad;
And on the distant cairn the watcher's ear
Caught doubtfully at times the breeze-borne note.
But years more gloomy follow'd; and no more
The assembled people dared, in face of day,
To worship God, or even at the dead
Of night, save when the wintry storm raved fierce,
And thunder-peals compell'd the men of blood
To couch within their dens; then dauntlessly
The scatter'd few would meet, in some deep dell
By rocks o'ercanopied, to hear the voice,
Their faithful pastor's voice. He by the gleam
Of sheeted lightning oped the sacred book,
And words of comfort spake; over their souls
His accents soothing came, as to her young
The heathfowl's plumes, when, at the close of eve,
She gathers in, mournful, her brood dispersed
By murderous sport, and o'er the remnant spreads
Fondly her wings; close nestling 'neath her breast
They cherish'd cower amid the purple bloom."

Not a few other sweet singers or strong, native to this nook of our isle, might we now in these humble pages lovingly commemorate; and "four shall we mention, dearer than the rest," for sake of that virtue, among many virtues, which we have been lauding all along, their nationality;—These are AIRD and MOTHERWELL, (of whom another hour,) MOIR and POLLOK.

Of Moir, our own "delightful Delta," as we love to call him—and the epithet now by right appertains to his name—we shall now say simply this, that he has produced many original pieces which will possess a permanent place in the poetry of Scotland. Delicacy and grace characterize his happiest compositions; some of them are beautiful in a cheerful spirit that has only to look on nature to be happy; and others breathe the simplest and purest pathos. His scenery, whether sea-coast or inland, is always truly Scottish; and at times his pen drops touches of light on minute objects, that till then had slumbered in the shade, but now "shine well where they stand" or lie, as component and characteristic parts of our lowland landscapes. Let others labour away at long poems, and for their pains get neglect or oblivion; Moir is seen as he is in many short ones, which the Scottish Muses may "not willingly let die." And that must be a pleasant thought when it touches the heart of the mildest and most modest of men, as he sits by his family-fire, beside those most dear to him, after a day past in smoothing, by his skill, the bed and the brow of pain, in restoring sickness to health, in alleviating suf-

ferings that cannot be cured, or in mitigating the pangs of death.

Pollok had great original genius strong in a sacred sense of religion. Such of his short compositions as we have seen, written in early youth, were but mere copies of verses, and gave little or no promise of power. But his soul was working in the green moorland solitudes round about his father's house, in the wild and beautiful parishes of Eaglesham and Mearns, separated by thee, O Yearn! sweetest of pastoral streams that murmur through the west, as under those broomy and birken banks and trees, where the grey-linties sing, is formed the clear junction of the rills, issuing, the one from the hill-spring above the Black-waterfall, and the other from the Brother-loch. The poet in prime of youth (he died in his twenty-seventh year) embarked on a high and adventurous emprise, and voyaged the illimitable Deep. His spirit expanded its wings, and in a holy pride felt them to be broad, as they hovered over the dark abyss. The "Course of Time," for so young a man, was a vast achievement. The book he loved best was the Bible, and his style is often scriptural. Of our poets, he had studied, we believe, but Milton, Young, and Byron. He had much to learn in composition; and, had he lived, he would have looked almost with humiliation on much that is at present eulogized by his devoted admirers. But the soul of poetry is there, though often dimly developed, and many passages there are, and long ones too, that heave, and hurry, and glow along in a divine enthusiasm.

" His ears he closed, to listen to the strains
That Sion's bards did consecrate of old,
And fix'd his Pindus upon Lebanon."

Let us fly again to England, and leaving for another hour Shelley and Hunt and Keates, and Croley and Milman and Heber, and Sterling and Milnes and Tennyson, with some younger aspirants of our own day; and Gray, Collins, and Goldsmith, and lesser stars of that constellation, let us alight on the verge of that famous era when the throne was occupied by Dryden, and then by Pope—searching still for a Great Poem. Did either of them ever write one? No—never. Sir Walter says finely of glorious John,

" And Dryden in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him play on to make them sport,
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line."

But why, we ask, did Dryden suffer a ribald king and court to debase and degrade him, and strangle his immortal strain? Because he was poor. But could he not have died of cold, thirst, and hunger—of starvation? Have not millions of men and women done so, rather than sacrifice their conscience! And shall we grant to a great poet that indulgence which many a humble hind would have flung with scorn in our teeth, and rather than have availed himself of it, faced the fagot, or the halter, or the stake set within the sea-flood? But it is satisfactory to know that Dryden, though still glorious John, was not a Great Poet. He was seldom visited by the pathetic or the sublime—else

had his genius held fast its integrity—been ribald to no ribald—and indignantly kicked to the devil both court and king. But what a master of reasoning in verse! And of verse what a volume of fire! "The long-resounding march and energy divine." Pope, again, with the common frailties of humanity, was an ethereal creature —and played on his own harp with finest taste, and wonderful execution. We doubt, indeed, if such a finished style has ever been heard since from any one of the King Apollo's musicians. His versification may be monotonous, but without a sweet and potent charm only to ears of leather. That his poetry has no passion is the creed of critics "of Cambyses' vein;" Heloise and the Unfortunate Lady have made the world's heart to throb. As for Imagination, we shall continue till such time as that faculty has been distinguished from Fancy, to see it shining in the Rape of the Lock, with a lambent lustre; if high intellect be not dominant in his Epistles and his Essay on Man, you will look for it in vain in the nineteenth century; all other Satires seem complimentary to their victims when read after the Dunciad—and could a man, whose heart was not heroic, have given us another Iliad, which, all unlike as it is to the Greek, may be read with transport, even after Homer's?

We have not yet, it would seem, found the object of our search—a Great Poem. Let us extend our quest into the Elizabethan age. We are at once sucked into the theatre. With the whole drama of that age we are conversant and familiar; but whether we understand it or not, is another question. It aspires to give represen-

tations of Human Life in all its infinite varieties, and inconsistencies, and conflicts, and turmoils produced by the Passions. Time and space are not suffered to interpose their unities between the Poet and his vast design, who, provided he can satisfy the spectators by the pageant of their own passions moving across the stage, may exhibit there whatever he wills from life, death, or the grave. 'Tis a sublime conception—and sometimes has given rise to sublime performance; but has been crowned with full success in no hands but those of Shakspeare. Great as was the genius of many of the dramatists of that age, not one of them has produced a Great Tragedy. A Great Tragedy indeed! What! without harmony or proportion in the plan—with all puzzling perplexities and inextricable entanglements in the plot—and with disgust and horror in the catastrophe? As for the characters, male and female—saw ye ever such a set of swaggerers and rantipoles as they often are in one act—Methodist preachers and demure young women at a love-feast in another—absolute heroes and heroines of high calibre in a third—and so on, changing and shifting name and nature, according to the laws of the Romantic Drama forsooth—but in hideous violation of the laws of nature—till the curtain falls over a heap of bodies huddled together, without regard to age or sex, as if they had been overtaken in liquor! We admit that there is gross exaggeration in the picture; but there is always truth in a tolerable caricature—and this is one of a tragedy of Webster, Ford, or Massinger.

It is satisfactory to know that the good sense, and good feeling, and good taste of the people of England, will not submit to be belaboured by editors and critics into unqualified admiration of such enormities. The Old English Drama lies buried in the dust with all its tragedies. Never more will they move across the stage. Scholars read them, and often with delight, admiration, and wonder; for genius is a strange spirit, and has begotten strange children on the body of the Tragic Muse. In the closet it is pleasant to peruse the countenances, at once divine, human, and brutal, of the incomprehensible monsters—to scan their forms, powerful though misshapen—to watch their movements, vigorous though distorted—and to hold up one's hands in amazement on hearing them not seldom discourse most excellent music. But we should shudder to see them on the stage enacting the parts of men and women—and call for the manager. All has been done for the least deformed of the tragedies of the Old English Drama that humanity could do, enlightened by the Christian religion; but Nature has risen up to vindicate herself against such misrepresentations as they afford; and sometimes finds it all she can do to stomach Shakspeare.

But the monstrosities we have mentioned are not the worst to be found in the Old English Drama. Others there are that, till civilized Christendom fall back into barbarous Heathendom, must for ever be unendurable to human ears, whether long or short—we mean the obscenities. That sin is banished for ever from our literature. The poet who might dare to

commit it, would be immediately hooted out of society, and sent to roost in barns among the owls. But the Old English Drama is stuffed with ineffable pollutions; and full of passages that the street-walker would be ashamed to read in the stews. We have not seen that volume of the Family Dramatists which contains Massinger. But if made fit for female reading, his plays must be mutilated and mangled out of all likeness to the original wholes. To free them even from the grossest impurities, without destroying their very life, is impossible; and it would be far better to make a selection of fine passages, after the manner of Lamb's Specimens—but with a severer eye—than to attempt in vain to preserve their character as plays, and at the same time to expunge all that is too disgusting, perhaps, to be dangerous to boys and virgins. Full-grown men may read what they choose—perhaps without suffering from it; but the modesty of the young clear eye must not be profaned—and we cannot, for our own part, imagine a *Family* Old English Dramatist.

And here again bursts upon us the glory of the Greek Drama. The Athenians were as wicked, as licentious, as polluted, and much more so, we hope, than ever were the English; but they debased not with their gross vices their glorious tragedies. Nature in her higher moods alone, and most majestic aspects, trod their stage. Buffoons, and ribalds, and zanies, and "rude indecent clowns," were confined to comedies; and even there they too were idealized, and resembled not the obscene samples that so often sicken us in the midst of "the

acting of a dreadful thing" in our old theatre. They knew that "with other ministrations, thou, O Nature!" teachest thy handmaid Art to soothe the souls of thy congregated children—congregated to behold her noble goings-on, and to rise up and depart elevated by the transcendent pageant. The Tragic muse was in those days a Priestess—tragedies were religious ceremonies; for all the ancestral stories they celebrated were under consecration—the spirit of the ages of heroes and demi-gods descended over the vast amphitheatre; and thus were Æschylus, and Sophocles, and Euripides, the guardians of the national character, which we all know, was, in spite of all it suffered under, for ever passionately enamoured of all the forms of greatness.

Forgive us—spirit of Shakspeare! that seem'st to animate that high-brow'd bust—if indeed we have offer'd any show of irreverence to thy name and nature; for now, in the noiselessness of midnight, to our awed but loving hearts do both appear divine! Forgive us—we beseech thee—that on going to bed—which we are just about to do—we may be able to compose ourselves to sleep—and dream of Miranda and Imogen, and Desdemona and Cordelia. Father revered of that holy family! by the strong light in the eyes of Innocence we beseech thee to forgive us!—Ha! what old ghost art thou—clothed in the weeds of more than mortal misery—mad mad, mad—come and gone—was it Lear?

We have found then, it seems—at last—the object of our search—a Great Poem—ay—four Great Poems—Lear—Hamlet—Othello—Macbeth. And was the

revealer of those high mysteries in his youth a deer-stealer in the parks of Warwickshire, a linkboy in London streets? And died he before his grand climacteric in a dimmish sort of a middle-sized tenement in Stratford-on-Avon, of a surfeit from an over-dose of home-brewed humming ale? Such is the tradition.

Had we a daughter—an only daughter—we should wish her to be like

"Heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb."

In that one line has Wordsworth done an unappreciable service to Spenser. He has improved upon a picture in the Fairy Queen—making "the beauty still more beauteous," by a single touch of a pencil dipped in moonlight, or in sunlight tender as Luna's smiles. Through Spenser's many nine-lined stanzas the lovely lady glides along her own world—and our eyes follow in delight the sinless wanderer. In Wordsworth's one single celestial line we behold her neither in time nor space—an immortal omnipresent idea at one gaze occupying the soul.

And is not the Fairy Queen a Great Poem? Like the Excursion, it is at all events a long one—"slow to begin, and never ending." That fire was a fortunate one in which so many books of it were burnt. If no such fortunate fire ever took place, then let us trust that the moths drillingly devoured the manuscript—and that 'tis all safe. Purgatorial pains—unless indeed they should prove eternal—are insufficient punishment for the impious man who invented Allegory. If you have got any thing to say, sir, out with it—in one or other of

the many forms of speech employed naturally by creatures to whom God has given the gift of "discourse of reason." But beware of misspending your life in perversely attempting to make shadow substance, and substance shadow. Wonderful analogies there are among all created things, material and immaterial—and millions so fine that Poets alone discern them—and sometimes succeed in showing them in words, Most spiritual region of poetry—and to be visited at rare times and seasons—nor all life long ought bard there to abide. For a while let the veil of Allegory be drawn before the face of Truth, that the light of its beauty may shine through it with a softened charm—dim and drear—like the moon gradually obscuring in its own halo on a dewy night. Such air-woven veil of Allegory is no human invention. The soul brought it with her when

> "Trailing clouds of glory she did come
> From heaven, which is her home."

Sometimes, now and then, in moods strange and high—obey the bidding of the soul—and allegorize; but live not all life-long in an Allegory—even as Spenser did—Spenser the divine; for with all his heavenly genius—and brighter visions never met mortal eyes than his—what is he but a "dreamer among men," and what may save that wondrous poem from the doom of oblivion?

To this conclusion must we come at last—that in the English language there is but one Great Poem. What! Not Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth? PARADISE LOST.

INCH-CRUIN.

Oh! for the plumes and pinions of the poised Eagle, that we might now hang over Loch-Lomond and all her isles! From what point of the compass would we come on our rushing vans? Up from Leven-banks, or down from Glenfalloch, or over the hill of Luss, or down to Rowardennan; and then up and away, as the chance currents in the sky might lead, with the Glory of Scotland, blue, bright, and breaking into foam, thousands on thousands of feet below, with every Island distinct in the peculiar beauty of its own youthful or ancient woods? For remember, that with the eagle's wing we must also have the eagle's eye; and all the while our own soul to look with such lens and such iris, and with its own endless visions to invest the pinnacles of all the far-down ruins of church or castle, encompassed with the umbrage of undying oaks.

We should as soon think of penning a critique on Milton's Paradise Lost as on Loch-Lomond. People there are in the world, doubtless, who think them both too long; but to our minds, neither the one nor the other exceeds the due measure by a leaf or a league. You may, if it so pleaseth you, think it, in a mist, a

Mediterranean sea. For then you behold many miles of tumbling waves, with no land beyond; and were a ship to rise up in full sail, she would seem voyaging on to some distant shore. Or you may look on it as a great arm only of the ocean, stretched out into the mountainous mainland. Or say, rather, some river of the first order, that shows to the sun Islands never ceasing to adorn his course for a thousand leagues, in another day about to be lost in the dominion of the sea. Or rather look on it as it is, as Loch Lomond, the Loch of a hundred Isles—of shores laden with all kinds of beauty, throughout the infinite succession of bays and harbours—huts and houses sprinkled over the sides of its green hills, that ever and anon send up a wider smoke from villages clustering round the church-tower beneath the wooded rocks—halls half-hidden in groves, for centuries the residence of families proud of their Gaelic blood—forest that, however wide be the fall beneath the axe when their hour is come, yet, far as the eye can reach, go circling round the mountain's base, inhabited by the roe and the red-deer;—but we have got into a sentence that threatens to be without end—a dim, dreary, sentence, in the middle of which the very writer himself gets afraid of ghosts, and fervently prays for the period when he shall be again chatting with the reader on a shady seat, under his own paragraph and his own pear-tree.

Oh! for our admirable friend Mr Smith of Jordanhill's matchless cutter, to glide through among the glittering archipelago! But we must be contented with a somewhat clumsy four-oared barge, wide and deep enough

for a cattle ferry-boat. This morning's sunrise found us at the mouth of the Goblin's Cave on Loch Katrine, and among Lomond's lovely isles shall sunset leave us among the last glimmer of the softened gold. To which of all those lovely isles shall we drift before the wind on the small heaving and breaking waves? To Inch-Murrin, where the fallow-deer repose—or to the yew-shaded Inch-Caillach, the cemetery of Clan-Alpin—the Holy Isle of Nuns? One hushing afternoon hour may yet be ours on the waters—another of the slowly-walking twilight—that time which the gazing spirit is too wrapt to measure, while "sinks the Day-star in the ocean's bed"—and so on to midnight, the reign of silence and shadow, the resplendent Diana with her hair-halo, and all her star-nymphs, rejoicing round their Queen. Let the names of all objects be forgotten—and imagination roam over the works of nature, as if they lay in their primeval majesty, without one trace of man's dominion. Slow-sailing Heron, that cloudlike seekest thy nest on yonder lofty mass of pines—to us thy flight seems the very symbol of a long lone life of peace. As thou foldest thy wide wings on the topmost bough, beneath thee tower the unregarded Ruins, where many generations sleep. Onwards thou floatest like a dream, nor changest thy gradually descending course for the Eagle, that, far above thy line of travel, comes rushing unwearied from his prey in distant Isles of the sea. The Osprey! off—off—to Inch-Loning—or the dark cliffs of Glenfalloch, many leagues away, which he will reach almost like a thought! Close your eyes but for a moment—and when

you look again, where is the Cloud-Cleaver now? Gone in the sunshine, and haply seated in his eyrie on Ben-Lomond's head.

But amidst all this splendour and magnificence, our eyes are drawn against our will, and by a sort of sad fascination which we cannot resist, along the glittering and dancing waves, towards the melancholy shores of Inch-Cruin, the Island of the Afflicted. Beautiful is it by nature, with its bays, and fields, and woods, as any isle that sees it shadow in the deeps; but human sorrows have steeped it in eternal gloom, and terribly is it haunted to our imagination. Here no woodman's hut peeps from the glade—here are not seen the branching antlers of the deer moving among the boughs that stir not—no place of peace is this where the world-wearied hermit sits penitent in his cell, and prepares his soul for Heaven. Its inhabitants are a woful people, and all its various charms are hidden from their eyes, or seen in ghastly transfiguration; for here, beneath the yew-tree's shade, sit moping, or roam about with rueful lamentation, the soul-distracted and the insane! Ay—these sweet and pleasant murmurs break round a Lunatic Asylum! And the shadows that are now and then seen among the umbrage are laughing or weeping in the eclipse of reason, and may never know again aught of the real character of this world, to which, exiled as they are from it, they are yet bound by the ties of a common nature that, though sorely deranged, are not wholly broken, and still separate them by an awful depth of darkness from the beasts that perish.

Thither, love yielding reluctantly at last to despair, has consented that the object on which all its wise solicitudes had for years been unavailably bestowed both night and day, should be rowed over, perhaps at midnight, and when asleep, and left there with beings like itself, all dimly conscious of their doom. To many such the change may often bring little or no heed—for outward things may have ceased to impress, and they may be living in their own rueful world, different from all that we hear or behold. To some it may seem that they have been spirited away to another state of existence—beautiful, indeed, and fair to see, with all those lovely trees and shadows of trees; but still a miserable, a most miserable place, without one face they ever saw before, and haunted by glaring eyes that shoot forth fear, suspicion, and hatred. Others, again, there are, who know well the misty head of Ben-Lomond, which, with joyful pleasure-parties set free from the city, they had in other years exultingly scaled, and looked down, perhaps, in a solemn pause of their youthful ecstasy, on the far-off and melancholy Inch-Cruin! Thankful are they for such a haven at last—for they are remote from the disturbance of the incomprehensible life that bewildered them, and from the pity of familiar faces that was more than could be borne.

So let us float upon our oars behind the shadow of this rock, nor approach nearer the sacred retreat of misery. Let us not gaze too intently into the glades, for we might see some figure there who wished to be seen nevermore, and recognize in the hurrying shadow

the living remains of a friend. How profound the hush! No sigh—no groan—no shriek—no voice—no tossing of arms—no restless chafing of feet! God in mercy has for a while calmed the congregation of the afflicted, and the Isle is overspread with a sweet Sabbath-silence. What medicine for them like the breath of heaven—the dew—the sunshine—and the murmur of the wave! Nature herself is their kind physician, and sometimes not unfrequently brings them by her holy skill back to the world of clear intelligence and serene affection. They listen calmly to the blessed sound of the oar that brings a visit of friends—to sojourn with them for a day—or to take them away to another retirement, where they, in restored reason, may sit around the board, nor fear to meditate during the midnight watches on the dream, which, although dispelled, may in all its ghastliness return. There was a glorious burst of sunshine! And of all the Lomond Isles, what one rises up in the sudden illumination so bright as Inch-Cruin?

Methinks we see sitting in his narrow and low-roofed cell, careless of food, dress, sleep, or shelter alike, him who in the opulent mart of commerce was one of the most opulent, and devoted heart and soul to show and magnificence. His house was like a palace with its pictured and mirror'd walls, and the nights wore away to dance, revelry, and song. Fortune poured riches at his feet, which he had only to gather up; and every enterprize in which he took part, prospered beyond the reach of imagination. But all at once—as if lightning had struck the dome of his prosperity, and earthquake

let down its foundations, it sank, crackled, and disappeared—and the man of a million was a houseless, infamous, and bankrupt beggar. In one day his proud face changed into the ghastly smiling of an idiot—he dragged his limbs in paralysis—and slavered out unmeaning words foreign to all the pursuits in which his active intellect had for many years been plunged. All his relations—to whom it was known he had never shown kindness—were persons in humble condition. Ruined creditors we do not expect to be very pitiful, and people asked what was to become of him till he died. A poor creature, whom he had seduced and abandoned to want, but who had succeeded to a small property on the death of a distant relation, remembered her first, her only love, when all the rest of the world were willing to forget him; and she it was who had him conveyed thither, herself sitting in the boat with her arm round the unconscious idiot, who now vegetates on the charity of her whom he betrayed. For fifteen years he has continued to exist in the same state, and you may pronounce his name on the busy Exchange of the city where he flourished and fell, and haply the person you speak to shall have entirely forgotten it.

The evils genius sometimes brings to its possessor have often been said and sung, perhaps with exaggerations, but not always without truth. It is found frequently apart from prudence and principle; and in a world constituted like ours, how can it fail to reap a harvest of misery or death? A fine genius, and even a high, had been bestowed on One who is now an inmate of that

cottage-cell, peering between these two rocks. At College, he outstripped all his compeers by powers equally versatile and profound—the first both in intellect and in imagination. He was a poor man's son—the only son of a working carpenter—and his father intended him for the church. But the youth soon felt that to him the trammels of a strict faith would be unbearable, and he lived on from year to year, uncertain what profession to choose. Meanwhile his friends, all inferior to him in talents and acquirements, followed the plain, open, and beaten path, that leads sooner or later to respectability and independence. He was left alone in his genius, useless, although admired—while those who had looked in high hopes on his early career, began to have their fears that they might never be realized. His first attempts to attract the notice of the public, although not absolute failures—for some of his compositions, both in prose and verse, were indeed beautiful—were not triumphantly successful, and he began to taste the bitterness of disappointed ambition. His wit and colloquial talents carried him into the society of the dissipated and the licentious; and, before he was aware of the fact, he had got the character of all others the most humiliating—that of a man who knew not how to estimate his own worth, nor to preserve it from pollution. He found himself silently and gradually excluded from the higher circle which he had once adorned, and sunk inextricably into a lower grade of social life. His whole habits became loose and irregular; his studies were pursued but by fits and starts; his knowledge, instead of keeping

pace with that of the times, became clouded and obscure, and even diminished; his dress was meaner; his manners hurried, and reckless, and wild, and erelong he became a slave to drunkenness, and then to every low and degrading vice.

His father died, it was said, of a broken heart—for to him his son had been all in all, and the unhappy youth felt that the death lay at his door. At last, shunned by most—tolerated but by a few for the sake of other times—domiciled in the haunts of infamy—loaded with a heap of paltry debts, and pursued by the hounds of the law, the fear of a prison drove him mad, and his whole mind was utterly and hopelessly overthrown. A few of the friends of his boyhood raised a subscription in his behoof—and within the gloom of these woods he has been shrouded for many years, but not unvisited once or twice a summer by some one, who knew, loved, and admired him in the morning of that genius that long before its meridian brightness had been so fatally eclipsed.

And can it be in cold and unimpassioned words like these that we thus speak of Thee and thy doom, thou Soul of fire, and once the brightest of the free, privileged by nature to walk along the mountain-ranges, and mix their spirits with the stars! Can it be that all thy glorious aspirations, by thyself forgotten, have no dwelling-place in the memory of one who loved thee so well, and had his deepest affection so profoundly returned! Thine was a heart once tremblingly alive to all the noblest and finest sympathies of our nature, and the humblest human sensibilities became beautiful when tinged by the light of

thy imagination. Thy genius invested the most ordinary objects with a charm not their own; and the vision it created thy lips were eloquent to disclose. What although thy poor old father died, because by thy hand all his hopes were shivered, and for thy sake poverty stripped even the coverlet from his dying-bed—yet we feel as if some dreadful destiny, rather than thy own crime, blinded thee to his fast decay, and closed thine ears in deafness to his beseeching prayer. Oh! charge not to creatures such as we all the fearful consequences of our misconduct and evil ways! We break hearts we would die to heal—and hurry on towards the grave those whom to save we would leap into the devouring fire. Many wondered in their anger that thou couldst be so callous to the old man's grief—and couldst walk tearless at his coffin. The very night of the day he was buried thou wert among thy wild companions, in a house of infamy, close to the wall of the churchyard. Was not that enough to tell us all that disease was in thy brain, and that reason, struggling with insanity, had changed sorrow to despair. But perfect forgiveness—forgiveness made tender by profoundest pity—was finally extended to thee by all thy friends—frail and erring like thyself in many things, although not so fatally misled and lost, because in the mystery of Providence not so irresistibly tried. It seemed as if thou hadst offended the Guardian Genius, who, according to the old philosophy which thou knewest so well, is given to every human being at his birth; and that then the angel left thy side, and Satan strove to drag thee to perdition. And hath any peace come

to thee—a youth no more— but in what might have been the prime of manhood, bent down, they say, to the ground, with a head all floating with silver hairs—hath any peace come to thy distracted soul in these woods, over which there now seems again to brood a holy horror? Yes—thy fine dark eyes are not wholly without intelligence as they look on the sun, moon, and stars; although all their courses seem now confused to thy imagination, once regular and ordered in their magnificence before that intellect which science claimed as her own. The harmonies of nature are not all lost on thy ear, poured forth throughout all seasons, over the world of sound and sight. Glimpses of beauty startle thee as thou wanderest along the shores of thy prison-isle; and that fine poetical genius, not yet extinguished altogether, although faint and flickering, gives vent to something like snatches of songs, and broken elegies, that seem to wail over the ruins of thy own soul! Such peace as ever visits them afflicted as thou art, be with thee in cell or on shore; nor lost to Heaven will be the wild moanings of—to us—thy unintelligible prayers!

But hark to the spirit-stirring voice of the bugle scaling the sky, and leaping up and down in echoes among the distant mountains! Such a strain animates the voltigeur, skirmishing in front of the line of battle, or sending flashes of sudden death from the woods. Alas! for him who now deludes his yet high heart with a few notes of the music that so often was accompanied by his sword waving on to glory. Unappalled was he ever in the whizzing and hissing fire—nor did his bold broad breast

ever shrink from the bayonet, that with the finished fencer's art he has often turned aside when red with death. In many of the pitched battles of the Spanish campaigns his plume was conspicuous over the dark green lines, that, breaking asunder in fragments like those of the flowing sea, only to re-advance over the bloody fields, cleared the ground that was to be debated between the great armaments. Yet in all such desperate service he never received one single wound. But on a mid-day march, as he was gaily singing a love-song, the sun smote him to the very brain, and from that moment his right hand grasped the sword no more.

Not on the face of all the earth—or of all the sea—is there a spot of profounder peace than that isle that has long been his abode. But to him all the scene is alive with the pomp of war. Every far-off precipice is a fort, that has its own Spanish name—and the cloud above seems to his eyes the tricolor, or the flag of his own victorious country. War, that dread game that nations play at, is now to the poor insane soldier a mere child's pastime, from which sometimes he himself will turn with a sigh or a smile. For sense assails him in his delirium, for a moment and no more; and he feels that he is far away, and for ever, from all his companions in glory, in an asylum that must be left but for the grave! Perhaps in such moments he may have remembered the night, when at Badajos he led the forlorn hope; but even forlorn hope now hath he none, and he sinks away back into his delusions, at which even his brother suf-

ferers smile—so foolish does the restless campaigner seem to these men of peace!

Lo! a white ghost-like figure, slowly issuing from the trees, and sitting herself down on a stone, with face fixed on the waters! Now she is so perfectly still, that had we not seen her motion thither, she and the rock would have seemed but one! Somewhat fantastically dressed, even in her apparent despair. Were we close to her, we should see a face yet beautiful, beneath hair white as snow. Her voice too, but seldom heard, is still sweet and low; and sometimes, when all are asleep, or at least silent, she begins at midnight to sing! She yet touches the guitar—an instrument in fashion in Scotland when she led the fashion—with infinite grace and delicacy—and the songs she loves best are those in a foreign tongue. For more than thirty years hath the unfortunate lady come to the water's edge daily, and hour after hour continue to sit motionless on that self-same stone, looking down into the loch. Her story is now almost like a dim tradition from other ages, and the history of those who come here often fades away into nothing. Every where else they are forgotten—here there are none who can remember. Who once so beautiful as the "Fair Portuguese?" It was said at that time that she was a Nun—but the sacred veil was drawn aside by the hand of love, and she came to Scotland with her deliverer! Yes, her deliverer! He delivered her from the gloom—often the peaceful gloom that hovers round the altar of Superstition—and after a

few years of love and life and joy—she sat where you now see her sitting, and the world she had adorned moved on in brightness and in music as before! Since there has to her been so much suffering—was there on her part no sin? No—all believed her to be guiltless, except one, whose jealousy would have seen falsehood lurking in an angel's eyes; but she was utterly deserted; and being in a strange country, worse than an orphan, her mind gave way; for say not—oh say not—that innocence can always stand against shame and despair! The hymns she sings at midnight are hymns to the Virgin; but all her songs are songs about love, and chivalry, and knights that went crusading to the Holy Land. He who brought her from another sanctuary into the one now before us, has been dead many years. He perished in shipwreck—and 'tis thought that she sits there gazing down into the loch, as on the place where he sank or was buried; for when told that he was drowned, she shrieked, and made the sign of the cross—and since that long-ago day that stone has in all weathers been her constant seat.

Away we go westwards—like fire-worshippers devoutly gazing on the setting sun. And another isle seems to shoot across our path, separated suddenly, as if by magic, from the mainland. How beautiful, with its many crescents, the low-lying shores, carrying here and there a single tree quite into the water, and with verdant shallows guarding the lonely seclusion even from the keel of canoe! Round and round we row, but not a single landing-place. Shall we take each of us a fair

burthen in his arms, and bear it to that knoll, whispering and quivering through the twilight with a few birches whose stems glitter like silver pillars in the shade? No —let us not disturb the silent people, now donning their green array for nightly revelries. It is the "Isle of Fairies," and on that knoll hath the fishermen often seen their Queen sitting on a throne, surrounded by myriads of creatures no taller than hare-bells; one splash of the oar—and all is vanished. There, it is said, lives among the Folk of Peace, the fair child who, many years ago, disappeared from her parents' shieling at Inversnayde, and whom they vainly wept over as dead. One evening she had floated away by herself in a small boat—while her parents heard, without fear, the clang—duller and duller—of the oars, no longer visible in the distant moonshine. In an hour the returning vessel touched the beach—but no child was to be seen—and they listened in vain for the music of the happy creature's songs. For weeks the loch rolled and roared like the sea—nor was the body found any where lying on the shore. Long, long afterwards, some little white bones were interred in Christian burial, for the parents believed them to be the remains of their child—all that had been left by the bill of the raven. But not so thought many dwellers along the mountain-shores—for had not her very voice been often heard by the shepherds, when the unseen flight of Fairies sailed singing along up the solitary Glenfalloch, away over the moors of Tynedrum, and down to the sweet Dalmally, where the shadow of Cruachan darkens the old ruins of melan-

choly Kilchurn? The lost child's parents died in their old age—but she, 'tis said, is unchanged in shape and features—the same fair thing she was the evening that she disappeared, only a shade of sadness is on her pale face, as if she were pining for the sound of human voices, and the gleam of the peat-fire of the shieling. Ever, when the Fairy-court is seen for a moment beneath the glimpses of the moon, she is sitting by the side of the gracious Queen. Words of might there are, that if whispered at right season, would yet recall her from the shadowy world, to which she has been spirited away; but small sentinels stand at their stations all round the isle, and at nearing of human breath, a shrill warning is given from sedge and water-lily, and like dewdrops melt away the phantoms, while, mixed with peals of little laughter, overhead is heard the winnowing of wings. For the hollow of the earth, and the hollow of the air, is their Invisible Kingdom; and when they touch the herbage or flowers of this earth of ours, whose lonely places they love, then only are they revealed to human eyes—at all times else to our senses unexistent as dreams!

A DAY AT WINDERMERE.

Old and gouty, we are confined to our chair; and occasionally, during an hour of rainless sunshine, are wheeled by female hands along the gravel-walks of our Policy, an unrepining and philosophical valetudinarian. Even the Crutch is laid up in ordinary, and is encircled with cobwebs. A monstrous spider has there set up his rest; and our still study ever and anon hearkens to the shrill buz of some poor fly expiring between those formidable forceps—just as so many human ephemerals have breathed their last beneath the bite of his indulgent master. 'Tis pleasure to look at Domitian—so we love to call him—sallying from the centre against a wearied wasp, lying, like a silkworm, circumvoluted in the inextricable toils, and then seizing the sinner by the nape of the neck, like Christopher with a Cockney, to see the emperor haul him away into the charnel-house. But we have often less savage recreations—such as watching our bee-hives when about to send forth colonies—feeding our pigeons, a purple people that dazzle the daylight—gathering roses as they choke our small chariot-wheels with their golden orbs—eating grapes out of vine-leaf-

draperied baskets, beautifying beneath the gentle fingers of the Gentle into fairy network graceful as the gossamer—drinking elder-flower frontiniac from invisible glasses, so transparent in its yellowness seems the liquid radiance—at one moment eyeing a page of Paradise Lost, and at another of Paradise Regained; for what else is the face of her who often visiteth our Eden, and whose coming and whose going is ever like a heavenly dream. Then laying back our head upon the cushion of our triumphal car, and with half-shut eyes, subsiding slowly into haunted sleep or slumber, with our fine features up to heaven, a saint-like image, such as Raphael loved to paint, or Flaxman to embue with the soul of stillness in the life-hushed marble. Such, dearest reader, are some of our pastimes—and so do we contrive to close our ears to the sound of the scythe of Saturn, ceaselessly sweeping over the earth, and leaving, at every stride of the mower, a swathe more rueful than ever, after a night of shipwreck did strew with ghastliness a lee sea-shore!

Thus do we make a virtue of necessity—and thus contentment wreathes with silk and velvet the prisoner's chains. Once were we—long, long ago—restless as a sunbeam on the restless wave—rapid as a river that seems enraged with all impediments, but all the while in passionate love

"Doth make sweet music with th' enamell'd stones"—

strong as a steed let loose from Arab's tent in the oasis to slake his thirst at the desert well—fierce in our harmless joy as a red-deer belling on the hills—tameless as

the eagle sporting in the storm—gay as the "dolphin on a tropic sea"—"mad as young bulls"—and wild as a whole wilderness of adolescent lions. But now—alas! and alack-a-day! the sunbeam is but a patch of sober verdure—the river is changed into a canal—the "desert-born" is foundered—the red-deer is slow as an old ram—the eagle has forsook his cliff and his clouds, and hops among the gooseberry bushes—the dolphin has degenerated into a land tortoise—without danger now might a very child take the bull by the horns—and though something of a lion still, our roar is, like that of the nightingale, "most musical, most melancholy"—and, as we attempt to shake our mane, your grandmother—fair peruser—cannot choose but weep.

It speaks folios in favour of our philanthropy, to know that, in our own imprisonment, we love to see all life free as air. Would that by a word of ours we could clothe all human shoulders with wings! Would that by a word of ours we could plume all human spirits with thoughts strong as the eagle's pinions, that they might winnow their way into the empyrean! Tories! Yes! we are Tories. Our faith is in the Divine right of kings—but easy, my boys, easy—all free men are kings, and they hold their empire from heaven. That is our political—philosophical—moral—religious creed. In its spirit we have lived—and in its spirit we hope to die—not on the scaffold like Sidney—no—no—no—not by any manner of means like Sidney on the scaffold—but like ourselves, on a hair-mattress above a feather-

bed, our head decently sunk in three pillows and one bolster, and our frame stretched out unagitatedly beneath a white counterpane. But meanwhile—though almost as unlocomotive as the dead in body—there is perpetual motion in our minds. Sleep is one thing, and stagnation is another—as is well known to all eyes that have ever seen, by moonlight and midnight, the face of Christopher North, or of Windermere.

Windermere! Why, at this blessed moment we behold the beauty of all its intermingling isles. There they are—all gazing down on their own reflected loveliness in the magic mirror of the air-like water, just as many a holy time we have seen them all agaze, when, with suspended oar and suspended breath—no sound but a ripple on the Naiad's bow, and a beating at our own heart—motionless in our own motionless bark—we seemed to float midway down that beautiful abyss between the heaven above and the heaven below, on some strange terrestrial scene composed of trees and the shadows of trees, by the imagination made indistinguishable to the eye, and as delight deepened into dreams, all lost at last, clouds, groves, water, air, sky, in their various and profound confusion of supernatural peace. But a sea-born breeze is on Bowness Bay; all at once the lake is blue as the sky: and that evanescent world is felt to have been but a vision. Like swans that had been asleep in the airless sunshine, lo! where from every shady nook appear the white-sailed pinnaces; for on merry Windermere—you must know—every breezy hour has its own Regatta.

But intending to be useful, we are becoming ornamental; of us it must not be said, that

"Pure description holds the place of sense"—

therefore, let us be simple but not silly, as plain as is possible without being prosy, as instructive as is consistent with being entertaining, a cheerful companion and a trusty guide.

We shall suppose that you have left Kendal, and are on your way to Bowness. Forget, as much as may be, all worldly cares and anxieties, and let your hearts be open and free to all genial impulses about to be breathed into them from the beautiful and sublime in nature. There is no need of that foolish state of feeling called enthusiasm. You have but to be happy; and by and by your happiness will grow into delight. The blue mountains already set your imaginations at work; among those clouds and mists you fancy many a magnificent precipice—and in the valleys that sleep below you image to yourselves the scenery of rivers and lakes. The landscape immediately around gradually grows more and more picturesque and romantic; and you feel that you are on the very borders of Fairy-Land. The first smile of Windermere salutes your impatient eyes, and sinks silently into your heart. You know not how beautiful it may be—nor yet in what the beauty consists; but your finest sensibilities to nature are touched—and a tinge of poetry, as from a rainbow, overspreads that cluster of islands that seems to woo you to their still retreats. And now

"Wooded Winandermere, the river-lake,"

with all its bays and promontories, lies in the morning light serene as a Sabbath, and cheerful as a Holyday; and you feel that there is loveliness on this earth more exquisite and perfect than ever visited your slumbers even in the glimpses of a dream. The first sight of such a scene will be unforgotten to your dying day—for such passive impressions are deeper than we can explain—our whole spiritual being is suddenly awakened to receive them—and associations, swift as light, are gathered into one Emotion of Beauty which shall be imperishable, and which, often as memory recalls that moment, grows into genius, and vents itself in appropriate expressions, each in itself a picture. Thus may one moment minister to years; and the life-wearied heart of old age by one delightful remembrance be restored to primal joy—the glory of the past brought beamingly upon the faded present—and the world that is obscurely passing away from our eyes re-illumined with the visions of its early morn. The shows of nature are indeed evanescent, but their spiritual influences are immortal; and from that grove now glowing in the sunlight may your heart derive a delight that shall utterly perish but in the grave.

But now you are in the White Lion, and our advice to you—perhaps unnecessary—is immediately to order breakfast. There are many parlours—some with a charming prospect, and some without any prospect at all; but remember that there are other people in the world besides yourselves—and therefore, into whatever parlour you may be shown by a pretty maid, be contented, and lose no time in addressing yourselves to

your repast. That over, be in no hurry to get on the Lake. Perhaps all the boats are engaged—and Billy Balmer is at the Waterhead. So stroll into the churchyard, and take a glance over the graves. Close to the oriel-window of the church is one tomb over which one might meditate half an autumnal day. Enter the church, and you will feel the beauty of these fine lines in the Excursion—

> "Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
> But large and massy; for duration built;
> With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
> By naked rafters intricately cross'd
> Like leafless underboughs, 'mid some thick grove,
> All wither'd by the depth of shade above!"

Go down to the low terrace-walk along the Bay. The Bay is in itself a Lake, at all times cheerful with its scattered fleet, at anchor or under weigh—its villas and cottages, each rejoicing in its garden or orchard—its meadows mellowing to the reedy margin of the pellucid water—its heath-covered boat-houses—its own portion of the Isle called Beautiful—and beyond that silvan haunt, the sweet Furness Fells, with gentle outline undulating in the sky, and among its spiral larches showing, here and there, groves and copses of the old unviolated woods. Yes, Bowness-Bay is in itself a Lake; but how finely does it blend away, through its screens of oak and sycamore-trees, into a larger Lake—another, yet the same—on whose blue bosom you see bearing down to windward—for the morning breeze is born—many a tiny sail. It has the appearance of a race. Yes

—it is a race; and the Liverpoolian, as of yore, is eating them all out of the wind, and without another tack will make her anchorage. But hark—Music! 'Tis the Bowness Band playing "See the conquering Hero comes!"—and our old friend has carried away the gold cup from all competitors.

Now turn your faces up the hill above the village school. That green mount is what is called a—Station. The villagers are admiring a grove of parasols, while you—the party—are admiring the village—with its irregular roofs—white, blue, grey, green, brown, and black walls—fruit-laden trees so yellow—its central church-tower—and environing groves variously burnished by autumn. Saw ye ever banks and braes and knolls so beautifully bedropt with human dwellings? There is no solitude about Windermere. Shame on human nature were Paradise uninhabited! Here, in amicable neighbourhood, are halls and huts—here rises through groves the dome of the rich man's mansion—and there the low roof of the poor man's cottage beneath its one single sycamore! Here are hundreds of small properties hereditary in the same families for hundreds of years—and never, never, O Westmoreland! may thy race of *statesmen* be extinct—nor the virtues that ennoble their humble households! See, suddenly brought forth by sunshine from among the old woods—and then sinking away into her usual unobtrusive serenity—the lake-loving Rayrig, almost level, so it seems, with the water, yet smiling over her own quiet bay from the grove-shelter of her pastoral mound. Within her walls may peace

ever dwell with piety—and the light of science long blend with the lustre of the domestic hearth. Thence to Calgarth is all one forest—yet glade-broken, and enlivened by open uplands; so that the roamer, while he expects a night of umbrage, often finds himself in the open day, beneath the bright blue bow of heaven haply without a cloud. The eye travels delighted over the multitudinous tree-tops—often dense as one single tree —till it rests, in sublime satisfaction, on the far-off mountains, that lose not a woody character till the tree-sprinkled pastures roughen into rocks—and rocks tower into precipices where the falcons breed. But the lake will not suffer the eye long to wander among the distant glooms. She wins us wholly to herself—and restlessly and passionately for a while, but calmly and affectionately at last, the heart embraces all her beauty, and wishes that the vision might endure for ever, and that here our tents were pitched—to be struck no more during our earthly pilgrimage. Imagination lapses into a thousand moods. O for a fairy pinnace to glide and float for aye over those golden waves! A hermit-cell on sweet Lady-Holm! A silvan shieling on Loughrig side! A nest in that nameless dell, which sees but one small slip of heaven, and longs at night for the reascending visit of its few loving stars! A dwelling open to all the skyey influence on the mountain-brow, the darling of the rising or the setting sun, and often seen by eyes in the lower world glittering through the rainbow!

All this seems a very imperfect picture indeed, or panorama of Windermere, from the hill behind the school-

house in the village of Bowness. So, to put a stop to such nonsense, let us descend to the White Lion—and enquire about Billy Balmer. Honest Billy has arrived from Waterhead—seems tolerably steady—Mr Ullock's boats may be trusted—so let us take a voyage of discovery on the Lake. Let those who have reason to think that they have been born to die a different death from drowning, hoist a sail. We to-day shall feather an oar. Billy takes the stroke—Mr William Garnet 's at the helm—and "row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Lowlands," is the choral song that accompanies the Naiad out of the bay, and round the north end of the Isle called Beautiful, under the wave-darkening umbrage of that ancient oak. And now we are in the lovely straits between that Island and the mainland of Furness Fells. The village has disappeared, but not melted away; for hark! the Church-tower tolls ten—and see the sun is high in heaven. High, but not hot—for the first September frosts chilled the rosy fingers of the morn as she bathed them in the dews, and the air is cool as a cucumber. Cool but bland—and as clear and transparent as a fine eye lighted up by a good conscience. There were breezes in Bowness Bay—but here there are none—or, if there be, they but whisper aloft in the tree-tops, and ruffle not the water, which is calm as Louisa's breast. The small isles here are but few in number—yet the best arithmetician of the party cannot count them—in confusion so rich and rare do they blend their shadows with those of the groves on the Isle called Beautiful, and on the Furness Fells. A tide imperceptible to the eye, drifts us

on among and above those beautiful reflections—that downward world of hanging dreams! and ever and anon we beckon unto Billy gently to dip his oar, that we may see a world destroyed and recreated in one moment of time. Yes, Billy! thou art a poet—and canst work more wonders with thine oar than could he with his pen who painted "heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb," wandering by herself in Fairy-Land. How is it, pray, that our souls are satiated with such beauty as this? Is it because 'tis unsubstantial all—senseless, though fair—and in its evanescence unsuited to the sympathies that yearn for the permanencies of breathing life? Dreams are delightful only as delusions within the delusion of this our mortal waking existence—one touch of what we call reality dissolves them all; blissful though they may have been, we care not when the bubble bursts—nay, we are glad again to return to our own natural world, care-haunted though in its happiest moods it be—glad as if we had escaped from glamoury; and, oh! beyond expression sweet it is once more to drink the light of living eyes—the music of living lips—after that preternatural hush that steeps the shadowy realms of the imagination, whether stretching along a sunset-heaven, or the mystical imagery of earth and sky floating in the lustre of lake or sea.

Therefore "row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Lowlands;" and as rowing is a thirsty exercise, let us land at the Ferry, and each man refresh himself with a horn of ale.

There is not a prettier place on all Windermere than

the Ferry-House, or one better adapted for a honey-moon. You can hand your bride into a boat almost out of the parlour window, and be off among the islands in a moment, or into nook or bay where no prying eye, even through telescope, (a most unwarrantable instrument,) can overlook your happiness; or you can secrete yourselves, like buck and doe, among the lady-fern on Furness Fells, where not a sunbeam can intrude on your sacred privacy, and where you may melt down hours to moments, in chaste connubial bliss, brightening futurity with plans of domestic enjoyment, like long lines of lustre streaming across the lake. But at present, let us visit the fort-looking building among the cliffs called The Station, and see how Windermere looks as we front the east. Why, you would not know it to be the same lake. The Isle called Beautiful, which heretofore had scarcely seemed an isle, appearing to belong to one or other shore of the mainland, from this point of view is an isle indeed, loading the lake with a weight of beauty, and giving it an ineffable character of richness which nowhere else does it possess; while the other lesser isles, dropt "in nature's careless haste" between it and the Furness Fells, connect it still with those lovely shores from which it floats a short way apart, without being disunited—one spirit blending the whole together within the compass of a fledgling's flight. Beyond these

> "Sister isles, that smile
> Together like a happy family
> Of beauty and of love,"

the eye meets the Rayrig-woods, with but a gleam of water between, only visible in sunshine, and is gently conducted by them up the hills of Applethwaite, diversified with cultivated enclosures, "all green as emerald" to their very summits, with all their pastoral and arable grounds besprinkled with stately single trees, copses, or groves. On the nearer side of these hills is seen, stretching far off to other lofty regions—Hill-bell and High Street conspicuous over the rest—the long vale of Troutbeck, with its picturesque cottages, in "numbers without number numberless," and all its sable pines and sycamores—on the further side, that most silvan of all silvan mountains, where lately the Hemans warbled her native wood-notes wild in her poetic bower, fitly called Dovenest, and beyond, Kirkstone Fells and Rydal Head, magnificent giants looking westward to the Langdale Pikes, (here unseen,)

"The last that parley with the setting sun."

Immediately in front, the hills are low and lovely, sloping with gentle undulations down to the lake, here grove-girdled along all its shores. The elm-grove that overshadows the Parsonage is especially conspicuous—stately and solemn in a green old age—and though now silent, in spring and early summer clamorous with rooks in love or alarm, an ancient family, and not to be expelled from their hereditary seats. Following the line of shore to the right, and turning your eyes unwillingly away from the bright and breezy Belfield, they fall on the elegant architecture of Storr's-hall, gleaming from a glade in the thick woods, and still looking southward

they see a serene series of the same forest scenery, along the heights of Gillhead and Gummer's-How, till Windermere is lost, apparently narrowed into a river, beyond Townhead and Fellfoot, where the prospect is closed by a beaconed eminence clothed with shadowy trees to the very base of the Tower. The points and promontories jutting into the lake from these and the opposite shores —which are of a humbler, though not tame character— are all placed most felicitously; and as the lights and shadows keep shifting on the water, assume endless varieties of relative position to the eye, so that often during one short hour you might think you had been gazing on Windermere with a kaleidoscopical eye, that had seemed to create the beauty which in good truth is floating there for ever on the bosom of nature.

That description, perhaps, is not so very much amiss; but should you think otherwise, be so good as give us a better: meanwhile let us descend from The Station— and its stained windows—stained into setting sunlight —frost and snow—the purpling autumn—and the first faint vernal green—and re-embark at the Ferry-House pier. Berkshire Island is fair—but we have always looked at it with an evil eye since unable to weather it in our old schooner, one day when the Victory, on the same tack, shot by us to windward like a salmon. But now we are half way between Storr's Point and Rawlinson's Nab—so, my dear Garnet, down with the helm and let us put about (who is that catching crabs?) for a fine front view of the Grecian edifice. It does honour to the genius of Gandy—and say what people choose of

a classic clime, the light of a Westmoreland sky falls beautifully on that marble-like stone, which, whether the heavens be in gloom or glory, "shines well where it stands," and flings across the lake a majestic shadow. Methought there passed along the lawn the image of one now in his tomb! The memory of that bright day returns, when Windermere glittered with all her sails in honour of the great Northern Minstrel, and of him the Eloquent, whose lips are now mute in the dust. Methinks we see his smile benign—that we hear his voice silver-sweet!

> "But away with melancholy,
> Nor doleful changes ring"—

as such thoughts came like shadows, like shadows let them depart—and spite of that which happeneth to all men—"this one day we give to merriment." Pull, Billy, pull—or we will turn you round—and in that case there is no refreshment nearer than Newby-bridge. The Naiad feels the invigorated impulse—and her cut-water murmurs to the tune of six knots through the tiny cataract foaming round her bows. The woods are all running down the lake,—and at that rate, by two post meridiem will be in the sea.

Commend us—on a tour—to lunch and dinner in one. 'Tis a saving both of time and money—and of all the dinner-lunches that ever were set upon a sublunary table, the *facile principes* are the dinner-lunches you may devour in the White Lion, Bowness. Take a walk—and a seat on the green that overlooks the village, almost on a level with the lead-roof of the venerable

church—while Hebe is laying the cloth for a repast fit for Jove, Juno, and the other heathen gods and goddesses; and if you must have politics — why, call for the Standard or Sun, (Heavens! there is that hawk already at the Times,) and devote a few hurried and hungry minutes to the French Revolution. Why, the Green of all Greens—often traced by us of yore beneath the midnight moonlight, till a path was worn along the edge of the low wall, still called "North's Walk"—is absolutely converted into a reading-room, and our laking party into a political club. There is Louisa with the Leeds Intelligencer—and Matilda with the Morning Herald—and Harriet with that York paper worth them all put together—for it tells of Priam, and the Cardinal, and St Nicholas—but, hark! a soft footstep! And then a soft voice—no dialect or accent pleasanter than the Westmoreland—whispers that the dinner-lunch is on the table—and no leading article like a cold round of beef, or a veal-pie. Let the Parisians settle their Constitution as they will—meanwhile let us strengthen ours; and after a single glass of Madeira—and a horn of home-brewed—let us off on foot—on horseback—in gig—car and chariot—to Troutbeck.

It is about a Scottish mile, we should think, from Bowness to Cook's House—along the turnpike road—half the distance lying embowered in the Rayrig woods —and half open to lake, cloud, and sky. It is pleasant to lose sight now and then of the lake along whose banks you are travelling, especially if during separation you become a Druid. The water woos you at your return

with her bluest smile, and her whitest murmur. Some of the finest trees in all the Rayrig woods have had the good sense to grow by the roadside, where they can see all that is passing, and make their own observations on us deciduous plants. Few of them seem to be very old—not much older than Christopher North—and, like him, they wear well, trunk sound to the core, arms with a long sweep, and head in fine proportions of cerebral development, fortified against all storms—perfect pictures of oaks in their prime. You may see one—without looking for it—near a farm-house called Millèr-ground—himself a grove. His trunk is clothed in a tunic of moss, which shows the ancient Sylvan to great advantage—and it would be no easy matter to give him a fall. Should you wish to see Windermere in all her glory, you have but to enter a gate a few yards on this side of his shade, and ascend an eminence called by us Greenbank—but you had as well leave your red mantle in the carriage, for an enormous white, long-horned Lancashire bull has for some years established his head-quarters not far off, and you would not wish your wife to become a widow, with six fatherless children. But the royal road of poetry is often the most splendid—and by keeping the turnpike, you soon find yourself on a terrace to which there was nothing to compare in the hanging gardens of Babylon. There is the widest breadth of water—the richest foreground of wood—and the most magnificent background of mountains—not only in Westmoreland but—believe us—in all the world. That blue roof is Calgarth—and no traveller ever pauses on this brow

without giving it a blessing—for the sake of the illustrious dead; for there long dwelt in the body Richard Watson, the Defender of the Faith, and there within the shadow of his memory still dwell those dearest on earth to his beatified spirit. So pass along in high and solemn thought, till you lose sight of Calgarth in the lone road that leads by St Catharines, and then relapse into pleasant fancies and picturesque dreams. This is the best way by far of approaching Troutbeck. No ups and downs in this life were ever more enlivening—not even the ups and downs of a bird learning to fly. Sheep-fences, six feet high, are admirable contrivances for shutting out scenery; and by shutting out much scenery, why, you confer an unappreciable value on the little that remains visible, and feel as if you could hug it to your heart. But sometimes one does feel tempted to shove down a few roods of intercepting stone-wall higher than the horse-hair on a cuirassier's casque—though sheep should eat the suckers and scions, protected as they there shoot, at the price of the concealment of the picturesque and the poetical from beauty-searching eyes. That is a long lane, it is said, which has never a turning; so this must be a short one, which has a hundred. You have turned your back on Windermere—and our advice to you is, to keep your face to the mountains. Troutbeck is a jewel—a diamond of a stream—but Bobbin Mills have exhausted some of the most lustrous pools, changing them into shallows, where the minnows rove. Deep dells are his delight—and he loves the rugged scaurs that intrench his wooded banks

—and the fantastic rocks that tower-like hang at intervals over his winding course, and seem sometimes to block it up; but the miner works his way out beneath galleries and arches in the living stone—sometimes silent—sometimes singing—and sometimes roaring like thunder—till subsiding into a placid spirit, ere he reaches the wooden bridge in the bonny holms of Calgarth, he glides graceful as the swan that sometimes sees his image in his breast, and through alder and willow banks murmurs away his life in the Lake.

Yes—that is Troutbeck Chapel—one of the smallest—and to our eyes the very simplest—of all the chapels among the hills. Yet will it be remembered when more pretending edifices are forgotten—just like some mild, sensible, but perhaps somewhat too silent person, whose acquaintanceship—nay friendship—we feel a wish to cultivate we scarce know why, except that he is mild, sensible, and silent; whereas we would not be civil to the *brusque*, upsetting, and loquacious puppy at his elbow, whose information is as various as it is profound, were one word or look of courtesy to save him from the flames. For heaven's sake, Louisa, don't sketch Troutbeck Chapel. There is nothing but a square tower—a horizontal roof—and some perpendicular walls. The outlines of the mountains here have no specific character. That bridge is but a poor feature—and the stream here very common-place. Put them not on paper. Yet alive—is not the secluded scene felt to be most beautiful? It has a soul. The pure spirit of the pastoral age is breathing here—in this utter noiselessness there

is the oblivion of all turmoil; and as the bleating of flocks comes on the ear, along the fine air, from the green pastures of the Kentmere range of soft undulating hills, the stilled heart whispers to itself, "this is peace!"

The worst of it is, that of all the people that on earth do dwell, your Troutbeck *statesmen*, we have heard, are the most litigious—the most quarrelsome about straws. Not a footpath in all the parish that has not cost many pounds in lawsuits. The most insignificant stile is referred to a full bench of magistrates. That gate was carried to the Quarter Sessions. No branch of a tree can shoot six inches over a march-wall without being indicted for a trespass. And should a frost-loosened stone tumble from some *skrees* down upon a neighbour's field, he will be served with a notice to quit before next morning. Many of the small properties hereabouts have been mortgaged over head and ears mainly to fee attorneys. Yet the last hoop of apples will go the same road—and the statesman, driven at last from his paternal fields, will sue for something or another *in formâ pauperis*, were it but the worthless wood and second-hand nails that may be destined for his coffin. This is a pretty picture of pastoral life—but we must take pastoral life as we find it. Nor have we any doubt that things were every whit as bad in the time of the Patriarchs—else—whence the satirical sneer, "sham Abraham?" Yonder is the Village straggling away up along the hillside, till the furthest house seems a rock fallen with trees from the mountain. The cottages stand for the most part in

clusters of twos or threes—with here and there what in Scotland we should call a *clachan*—many a sma' toun within the ae lang toun; but where in all braid Scotland is a mile-long scattered congregation of rural dwellings, all dropt down where the Painter and the Poet would have wished to plant them, on knolls and in dells, and on banks and braes, and below tree-crested rocks, and all bound together in picturesque confusion by old groves of ash, oak, and sycamore, and by flower-gardens and fruit-orchards, rich as those of the Hesperides?

If you have no objections—our pretty dears—we shall return to Bowness by Lowood. Let us form a straggling line of march—so that we may one and all indulge in our own silent fancies—and let not a word be spoken, virgins—under the penalty of two kisses for one syllable—till we crown the height above Briary-Close. Why, there it is already—and we hear our musical friend's voice-accompanied guitar. From the front of his cottage, the head and shoulders of Windermere are seen in their most majestic shape—and from nowhere else is the long-withdrawing Langdale so magnificently closed by mountains. There at sunset hangs "Cloudland, gorgeous land," by gazing on which for an hour we shall all become poets and poetesses. Who said that Windermere was too narrow? The same critic who thinks the full harvest moon too round—and despises the twinkling of the evening star. It is all the way down —from head to foot—from the Brathay to the Leven—of the proper breadth precisely—to a quarter of an inch.

Were the reeds in Poolwyke Bay—on which the birds love to balance themselves—at low or high water, to be visible longer or shorter than what they have always been in the habit of being on such occasions since first we brushed them with an oar, when landing in our skiff from the Endeavour, the beauty of the whole of Windermere would be impaired—so exquisitely adapted is that pellucid gleam to the lips of its silvan shores. True, there are flaws in the diamond—but only when the squalls come; and as the blackness sweeps by, that diamond of the first water is again sky-bright and sky-blue as an angel's eyes. Lowood Bay—we are now embarked in Mr Jackson's prettiest pinnace—when the sun is westering—which it now is—surpasses all other bays in freshwater mediterraneans. Eve loves to see her pensive face reflected in that serenest mirror. To flatter such a divinity is impossible—but sure she never wears a smile so divine as when adjusting her dusky tresses in that truest of all glasses, set in the richest of all frames. Pleased she retires—with a wavering motion—and casting "many a longing, lingering look behind" fades indistinctly away among the Brathay woods; while Night, her elder sister, or rather her younger—we really know not which—takes her place at the darkening mirror, till it glitters with her crescent-moon-coronet, wreathed perhaps with a white cloud, and just over the silver bow the lustre of one large yellow star.

As none of the party complain of hunger, let us crack among us a single bottle of our worthy host's choice old Madeira—and then haste in the barouche

(ha! here it is) to Bowness. It is right now to laugh —and sing—and recite poetry—and talk all manner of nonsense. Didn't ye hear some thing crack? Can it be a spring—or merely the axletree? Our clerical friend from Chester assures us 'twas but a string of his guitar—so no more shrieking—and after coffee we shall have

"Rise up, rise up, Xarifa, lay your golden cushion down!"

And then we two, my dear sir, must have a contest at chess—at which, if you beat us, we shall leave our bed at midnight, and murder you in your sleep. "But where," murmurs Matilda, "are we going?" To Oresthead, love—and Elleray—for your must see a sight these sweet eyes of thine never saw before—a SUNSET.

We have often wondered if there be in the world one woman indisputably and undeniably the most beautiful of all women—or if, indeed, our first mother were "the loveliest of her daughters, Eve." What human female beauty is all men feel—but few men know—and none can tell—further than that it is perfect spiritual health, breathingly embodied in perfect corporeal flesh and blood, according to certain heaven-framed adaptions of form and hue, that by a familiar yet inscrutable mystery, to our senses and our souls express sanctity and purity of the immortal essence enshrined within, by aid of all associated perceptions and emotions that the heart and the imagination can agglomerate round them, as instantly and as unhesitatingly as the faculties of thought and feeling can agglomerate round a lily or a rose, for example, the perceptions and emotions that

make them—by divine right of inalienable beauty—th Royal Families of Flowers. This definition—or description rather—of human female beauty, may appear to some, as indeed it appears to us—something vague; but all profound truths—out of the exact sciences—are something vague; and it is manifestly the design of a benign and gracious Providence, that they should be so till the end of time—till mortality puts on immortality—and earth is heaven. Vagueness, therefore, is no fault in philosophy—any more than in the dawn of morning, or the gloaming of eve. Enough, if each clause of the sentence that seeks to elucidate a confessed mystery, has a meaning harmonious with all the meanings in all the other clauses—and that the effect of the whole taken together is musical—and a tune. Then it is Truth. For all Falsehood is dissonant—and verity is concent. It is our faith, that the souls of some women are angelic—or nearly so—by nature and the Christian religion; and that the faces and persons of some women are angelic or nearly so—whose souls, nevertheless, are seen to be far otherwise—and, on that discovery, beauty fades or dies. But may not soul and body—spirit and matter—meet in perfect union at birth; and grow together into a creature, though of spiritual mould, comparable with Eve before the Fall? Such a creature—such creatures—may have been; but the question is—did you ever see one? We almost think that we have—but many long years ago;

> "She is dedde,
> Gone to her death-bedde
> All under the willow-tree."

And it may be that her image in the moonlight of memory and imagination, may be more perfectly beautiful than she herself ever was, when

"Upgrew that living flower beneath our eye."

Yes—'tis thus that we form to ourselves—incommunicably within our souls—what we choose to call Ideal Beauty—that is, a life-in-death image or Eidolon of a Being whose voice was once heard, and whose footsteps once wandered among the flowers of this earth. But it is a mistake to believe that such beauty as this can visit the soul only after the original in which it once breathed is no more. For as it can only be seen by profoundest passion—and the profoundest are the passions of Love, and Pity, and Grief—then why may not each and all of these passions—when we consider the constitution of this world and this life—be awakened in their utmost height and depth by the sight of living beauty, as well as by the memory of the dead? To do so is surely within "the reachings of our souls,"—and if so, then may the virgin beauty of his daughter, praying with folded hands and heavenward face when leaning in health on her father's knees, transcend even the ideal beauty which shall afterwards visit his slumbers nightly, long years after he has laid her head in the grave. If by ideal beauty, you mean a beauty beyond whatever breathed, and moved, and had its being on earth—then we suspect that not even "that inner eye which is the bliss of solitude" ever beheld it; but if you merely mean by ideal beauty, that which is composed of ideas, and of the feelings attached by nature to ideas, then, begging

your pardon, my good sir, all beauty whatever is ideal —and you had better begin to study metaphysics.

But what we were wishing to say is this—that whatever may be the truth with regard to human female beauty—Windermere, seen by sunset from the spot where we now stand, Elleray, is at this moment the most beautiful scene on this earth. The reasons why it must be so are multitudinous. Not only can the eye take in, but the imagination, in its awakened power, can master all the component elements of the spectacle, —and while it adequately discerns and sufficiently feels the influence of each, is alive throughout all its essence to the divine agency of the whole. The charm lies in its entirety—its unity, which is so perfect—so seemeth it to our eyes—that 'tis in itself a complete world—of which not a line could be altered without disturbing the spirit of beauty that lies recumbent there, wherever the earth meets the sky. There is nothing here fragmentary; and had a poet been born, and bred here all his days, nor known aught of fair or grand beyond this liquid vale, yet had he sung truly and profoundly of the shows of nature. No rude and shapeless masses of mountains—such as too often in our own dear Scotland encumber the earth with dreary desolation—with gloom without grandeur—and magnitude without magnificence. But almost in orderly array, and irregular just up to the point of the picturesque, where poetry is not needed for the fancy's pleasure, stand the Race of Giants—mist-veiled transparently—or crowned with clouds slowly settling of their own accord into all the forms that

Beauty loves, when with her sister-spirit Peace she descends at eve from highest heaven to sleep among the shades of earth.

Sweet would be the hush of lake, woods, and skies, were it not so solemn! The silence is that of a temple, and, as we face the west, irresistibly are we led to adore. The mighty sun occupies with his flaming retinue all the region. Mighty yet mild—for from his disc, awhile insufferably bright, is effused now a gentle crimson light, that dyes all the west in one uniform glory, save where yet round the cloud edges lingers the purple, the green, and the yellow lustre, unwilling to forsake the violet beds of the sky, changing, while we gaze, into heavenly roses; till that prevailing crimson colour at last gains entire possession of the heavens, and all the previous splendour gives way to one, whose paramount purity, lustrous as fire, is in its steadfast beauty sublime. And, lo! the lake has received that sunset into its bosom. It, too, softly burns with a crimson glow—and, as sinks the sun below the mountains, Windermere, gorgeous in her array as the western sky, keeps fading away as it fades, till at last all the ineffable splendour expires, and the spirit that has been lost to this world in the transcendent vision, or has been seeing all things appertaining to this world in visionary symbols, returns from that celestial sojourn, and knows that its lot is, henceforth as heretofore, to walk weariedly perhaps, and wobegone, over the no longer divine but disenchanted earth!

It is very kind in the moon and stars—just like them—

to rise so soon after sunset. The heart sinks at the sight of the sky, when a characterless night succeeds such a blaze of light—like dull reality dashing the last vestiges of the brightest of dreams. When the moon is "hid in her vacant interlunar cave," and not a star can "burst its cerements," imagination in the dim blank droops her wings—our thoughts become of the earth earthly—and poetry seems a pastime fit but for fools and children. But how different our mood, when

"Glows the firmament with living sapphires,"

and Diana, who has ascended high in heaven, without our having once observed the divinity, bends her silver bow among the rejoicing stars, while the lake, like another sky, seems to contain its own luminaries, a different division of the constellated night! 'Tis merry Windermere no more. Yet we must not call her melancholy—though somewhat sad she seems, and pensive, as if the stillness of universal nature did touch her heart. How serene all the lights—how peaceful all the shadows! Steadfast alike—as if they would brood for ever—yet transient as all loveliness—and at the mercy of every cloud. In some places, the lake has disappeared—in others, the moonlight is almost like sunshine—only silver instead of gold. Here spots of quiet light—there lines of trembling lustre—and there a flood of radiance chequered by the images of trees. Lo! the Isle called Beautiful has now gathered upon its central grove all the radiance issuing from that celestial Urn; and almost in another moment it seems blended with the dim mass of mainland, and blackness enshrouds the woods. Still

as seems the night to unobservant eyes, it is fluctuating in its expression as the face of a sleeper overspread with pleasant but disturbing dreams. Never for any two successive moments is the aspect of the night the same —each smile has its own meaning, its own character; and Light is felt to be like Music, to have a melody and a harmony of its own—so mysteriously allied are the powers and provinces of eye and ear, and by such a kindred and congenial agency do they administer to the workings of the spirit.

Well, that is very extraordinary—Rain—rain—rain! All the eyes of heaven were bright as bright might be—the sky was blue as violets—that braided whiteness, that here and there floated like a veil on the brow of night, was all that recalled the memory of clouds—and as for the moon, no faintest halo yellowed round her orb, that seemed indeed "one perfect chrysolite;"—yet while all the winds seemed laid asleep till morn, and beauty to have chained all the elements into peace—overcast in a moment is the firmament—an evanishing has left it blank as mist—there is a fast, thick, pattering on the woods—yes—rain—rain—rain—and ere we reach Bowness, the party will be wet through to their skins. Nay—matters are getting still more serious—for there was lightning—yea, lightning! Ten seconds! and hark, very respectable thunder! With all our wisdom, we have not been weather-wise—or we should have known, when we saw it, an electrical sunset. Only look now towards the West. There floats Noah's Ark—a magnificent spectacle; and now for the Flood. That far-off sullen sound

proclaims cataracts, And what may mean that sighing and moaning and muttering up among the cliffs? See —see how the sheet lightning shows the long lake-shore all tumbling with foamy breakers. A strong wind is there—but here there is not a breath. But the woods across the lake are bowing their heads to the blast. Windermere is in a tumult—the storm comes flying on wings all abroad—and now we are in the very heart of the hurricane. See, in Bowness is hurrying many a light —for the people fear we may be on the lake; and faithful Billy, depend on't, is launching his life-boat to go to our assistance. Well, this is an adventure.——But soft—what ails our Argand Lamp! Our Study is in such darkness that we cannot see our paper—in the midst of a thunder-storm we conclude, and forbed by a flaff of lightning.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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